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GRANADA

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

M. SABISTON.



London :

SAMUEL TINSLEY,
10 SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND.
1876.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

IN "GRANADA," the chief of the five poems contained in this small volume, many events are referred to, which, though familiar enough to readers of history, are probably for the greater part unknown to those who are not such. I have therefore given, in the form of a slight introductory sketch—beginning with the invasion of Spain by the Arabs and ending with the fall of Granada, and the subsequent expulsion of the Moors—such information concerning persons and events as will make the references in the poem readily understood by all.

M. S.

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INTRODUCTION.

SPAIN was conquered by the Arabs in the early part of the eighth century. At that time Roderic, "the last of the Goths," was monarch of the whole Iberian Peninsula. He was a brave and active prince; but it is said that after his accession to the throne he yielded to indulgence in pleasure, and that the invasion of his kingdom was planned as an act of private revenge, which he had provoked by the gratification of an improper passion for a beautiful maiden of high birth. This was Florinda, the daughter of Count Julian, a proud and powerful Gothic noble, who commanded the fortress of Ceuta, on the African side of the Straits. Some assert that she yielded voluntarily to his wishes; by the Arabs she was always called *La Caba*, a term of the deepest reproach. Others say the King had recourse to violence to effect his purpose, and that Florinda secretly sent word to her father, telling him of

the cruel shame she had been made to suffer, and entreating him to punish her violator.

About this time happened another event in which Roderic was also the chief actor. Near Toledo stood an ancient tower in which vast treasures and wonderful mysteries were concealed ; and it was said the opening of it would be followed by some dread result. None of the previous kings of Spain had ventured to touch this tower ; but Roderic resolved to penetrate its secrets, and when he entered it, he beheld his own overthrow and the destruction of the kingdom foreshadowed.

In the meantime, Count Julian, bent on revenge, went to the camp of the Arab general, Musa ben Nosier, who commanded an army of a hundred thousand men in Africa, and who had lately endeavoured to wrest Ceuta from the Goths. Julian invited him to cross over to Spain with his army, and promised to aid him with all his adherents in a war against Roderic. Musa wrote to the Caliph at Damascus, laying the whole matter before him, and asking for authority to undertake this new conquest. His request was granted ; and he immediately sent his lieutenant, Taric ben Zeyad, with a force of twelve thousand chosen men, cavalry and infantry, to effect a landing and begin the conquest of the country. Taric crossed in the night, un-

observed, and disembarked his troops near Tarifa on the following day, the 30th April, A.D. 711. He at once took possession of the Rock of Calpe, his first stronghold ; from this circumstance the Arabs called it Gibel Taric, that is, the Hill of Taric, which the Spaniards have softened into Gibraltar. He was here attacked by a Christian force exceeding his own in number ; but he quickly defeated and destroyed it. Encouraged by this success, Musa sent him twenty thousand additional troops.

Roderic soon collected an army of about a hundred thousand men, and now advanced to fight the invaders, and drive them back into the sea. Several days skirmishing was followed by a great and decisive battle in the neighbourhood of Xerez de la Frontera, in which the Christians, though numbering three or four to one, were routed with fearful slaughter ; and Roderic himself either fell in the fierce struggle, or, as most accounts say, perished in the flight. This memorable battle was fought on the 26th day of July, A.D. 711.

Musa, on hearing of this great victory, crossed over in person to Spain, with ten thousand horse and a like number of foot. The two chiefs soon accomplished the subjugation of the whole country. But a violent quarrel having arisen between them, the Caliph, who feared it would

lead to the loss of his new dominions, commanded them to leave their armies in charge of fit persons, and to appear before him at Damascus. Taric set out at once, and was received in a gratifying manner by the Caliph, who told him that his great services were well-known and appreciated. Musa delayed for some time, under the pretence of arranging his affairs. He appointed his eldest and favourite son, Abdelasis, to the government of Spain, and to his other sons, Abdelola and Merwan, he left the government of Western Africa.

When, at last, he approached the confines of Syria, the Caliph, Walid I., was lying dangerously ill, and it was expected he would die. The Caliph's brother and heir, Suleyman, who wished his own near accession to the throne to be graced by Musa's triumphal entry into Damascus, and who also wished to have the disposal of the enormous treasures he brought, sent word to him to delay for a few days his approach to the capital. As Walid was still living, Musa feared to comply with this request ; and, without making a halt, he entered the city and presented himself before him. The dying monarch received the treasures and distributed them ; but, in a few days, he breathed his last, and Suleyman, now Caliph, wreaked his vengeance upon Musa. The unfortunate emir was deprived of his command

and his wealth, imprisoned like a felon, and beaten with rods. Nor did the Caliph's vengeance end here. He gave an order for the death of Musa's three sons. *Abdelasis* was poniarded while at prayers in a mosque at Seville ; his decapitated body was buried under the pavement in the court-yard of his own palace, and his head was embalmed and sent to the Caliph at Damascus. The cruel monarch showed it to Musa, who soon after heard of the death of his other two sons in Africa. Poor, wretched, and childless, the old man in a short time sank, broken-hearted, into the grave.

To this painful tale may be added the popular account of the fate of the traitor Julian and his family. Ancient chronicles tell us that *Florinda* wept over the woes of unhappy Spain. Her name was never mentioned but with opprobrium ; and when she heard her countrymen curse her as the cause of all the evils that had befallen them, her remorse and sufferings became so great that she flung herself headlong from a tower in Malaga, and was dashed to pieces. The new emir sent to Spain becoming suspicious of Count Julian, threw his wife into prison and killed his young son. Count Julian himself is said to have been put to death with horrible tortures.*

* The story of *Florinda* is now rejected by judicious historians, but the poem follows the popular belief of the time.

The Arab chiefs in Spain soon began to quarrel among themselves; and the different emirs sent by the Caliph were either unable to repress the disorders, or provoked new outbreaks by their cruelty and injustice. The frequent changes of rulers kept the country in confusion and trouble: in the short period of forty years no less than twenty different emirs governed it with legal or usurped authority. In the East, also, fierce and sanguinary wars had been fought, which ended in the defeat and death of Merwan II., the last Damascene caliph of the house of Ommiyah, by Abul Abbas, the founder of the Abbassides. The authority of the new Caliph was not recognized by the Spanish Arabs, most of whom were adherents of the house of Ommiyah. Therefore, about eighty of the most prudent chiefs met secretly at Cordova in the year 753, and resolved to invite to Spain Abderahman, a son of the late Caliph, who had escaped from his enemies and taken refuge in Africa. He accepted their invitation, came to Spain, and soon, by his valour and conduct, triumphed over the Abasside emir, and compelled the whole country to acknowledge his authority. He fixed the seat of his government at Cordova, where he founded the Western Caliphate, and built one of the largest and most magnificent mosques in the world. He died in 788. His descendants, some of whom were

princes that would have been regarded as illustrious in any age and in any country, sat on the throne of Cordova for two hundred and forty-four years. During this period the Christians, who formed the great mass of the population, established several small kingdoms in the north of Spain, and eventually became able to contend on equal terms with the Moslems. They were, however, repeatedly defeated, and almost re-subjugated by the celebrated vizier of Hixem II., Mohammed ben Abdallah, surnamed for his glorious exploits *Almansor*. In 997 he laid waste the whole of Galicia, destroyed the cathedral of Compostella, in which rested the bones of St. James, the patron saint of Spain, and carried off the bells, which were melted into lamps for the great mosque at Cordova.

After his death, civil wars raged with all their ruinous consequences. The rivals for the throne of Cordova called in against each other the aid of the Christians, and repaid them with the cession of cities and territories. The walis of the different provinces sided with one or another as suited their own interests, and the populace of Cordova began to make and unmake their kings at pleasure. At last Hixem III. was deposed by a licentious mob, on the 20th of November, 1031. With him ended the Caliphate of the West and the noble race of the house of Ommiyah. The

sovereign of Cordova now ceased to be the only one recognized in Mahometan Spain. Seville, Valencia, Zaragoza, Badajoz, Toledo—all had kings of their own. The Arab empire in Spain was broken into a hundred hostile parts, which one after another fell a prey to the Christians, now the dominant people of the Peninsula. At last, in 1235, Ferdinand III. of Castile took Cordova, the seat of the Caliphate, and the capital for five hundred and twenty years of all Mahometan Spain, from Aben Hud, a descendant of the former petty kings of Zaragoza, who had established himself there.

About this time another and more successful Moslem prince, a man of great prudence and ability, was growing into power in Andalusia. This was Mahommed ben Alhamar, who, having overcome his rivals, united their territories under his sway, and, in 1238, founded the kingdom of GRANADA.

This new state immediately became the asylum of the Spanish Moslems, or Moors, as they are generally called, who came from the other parts of Spain now wrested from them by the Christians. Here were collected nearly all that remained of that brave and noble race which had conquered the Goths and overrun the Peninsula; and here, for two hundred and fifty years longer, flourished the industry, the civilization, the

learning, the refinements and the arts, which cast so bright a lustre on Mahometan Spain.

One of the most remarkable events that occurred during this period was the defeat, in the year 1319, of the two regents of Castile, the Infantes Pedro and Juan, who led an immense host as far as the mountain of Elvira, within sight of the city of Granada. A small Moorish army attacked and routed them with fearful slaughter; both the Infantes, and, it is said, fifty thousand Christian soldiers, were slain. In 1431, the Christians, in their turn, inflicted a terrible defeat on the Moors in the famous battle of Tarifa.

The marriage of Ferdinand of Arragon and Isabella of Castile, in the year 1469, united all Christian Spain under one government, and the period was now at hand when the Moors were to make their last gallant but unsuccessful struggle against the overpowering forces of their enemies. At this time Muley Abul Hassan sat on the throne of Granada. He refused to pay the tribute demanded by Ferdinand, and while the latter was preparing for war, anticipated him in striking the first blow by capturing Zahara, in 1481. Reverses soon followed. Alhama was taken by the Spaniards, and Muley Abul Hassan fell into disfavour with the fickle and rebellious populace of Granada. While he was ab-

sent from the city, vainly endeavouring to retake Alhama, a conspiracy was formed to depose him, and to place on the throne the young prince Abu Abdallah, or Boabdil, his son by his first wife, the famous Sultana Ayxa la Horra, or the Chaste.

Abdallah was sustained by a powerful faction, and an unnatural contest took place between the partisans of the father and the son. The streets of Granada flowed with blood; but Abdallah finally triumphed. He had, however, no better success than his father against the Spaniards. He was defeated and taken prisoner by the Count de Cabra, at the battle of Lucena, April 21st, 1483. Abdallah then not only paid Ferdinand a large sum for his ransom, but, in order to obtain assistance against his father, bound himself to hold the kingdom as Ferdinand's vassal, and to pay him tribute. Having regained his liberty, he returned to Granada, and the civil war was immediately resumed. After several scenes of slaughter in the streets of the capital, he was compelled to withdraw to Almeria. This suicidal struggle favoured the progress of the Spaniards, who laid the country waste in all directions, and seized many of its strongholds, among the rest the strong mountain fortress of Ronda.

On hearing of the fall of this place the people of Granada became furious. The state of the

kingdom was already sufficiently desperate, but, as if to make its destruction still more certain and speedy, a third faction was formed, which supported the claims of Muley Abdallah el Zagal, brother of Muley Abul Hassan, and uncle of Boabdil. The old king was forced to retire to Salobreña, where he died; while a fierce and sanguinary contest was kept up between the two rivals, who hated each other with a deadly hatred. An attempt was made to end the strife between them by a division of the kingdom.

The city of Granada fell to El Zagal, Loxa to Abdallah. The latter place was besieged by Ferdinand in person; after some hard fighting, it was compelled to surrender, and Abdallah found himself again a prisoner. Ferdinand set him at liberty in order that the civil war might be continued, while he himself made his conquests at pleasure. The plan succeeded. The two rivals, at the head of their factions, fought furiously night and day in the streets of Granada, while Ferdinand quietly laid siege to Velez-Malaga. El Zagal was at last persuaded to go to its relief; and having failed in the attempt, he returned to Granada, only to find the gates closed against him, and Abdallah in full possession of the city.

Velez-Malaga fell, as was to be expected, and Ferdinand, with a large army and a powerful

fleet, began the siege of the great and important city of Malaga. He was beaten in every assault, and the place, after terrible sufferings on the part of the citizens, yielded at last only through the stern necessities of famine. Ferdinand extorted from the inhabitants all their money, jewels, and valuables, as ransom, and then cruelly made them all slaves.

El Zagal still held Guadix, Almeria, and Baza; but, when Ferdinand wrested the last named place from him, the old warrior perceived further resistance to be useless, and surrendered the former two cities and all his remaining territories, on the terms offered him. A short time after the Spaniards got possession of Guadix, they, in violation of the terms on which the city was given up, drove the inhabitants forth as homeless wanderers, and threatened to treat them as rebels if they should return.

Abdallah was now sole ruler of Granada, but his kingdom consisted of little more than the city itself and a small extent of territory immediately around it. The dupe and tool of Ferdinand, he looked on that crafty monarch as his friend; but he was soon undeceived. Ferdinand called on him to fulfil the treaty he had made on the surrender of Loxa, which bound him to deliver up Granada whenever the Christian monarch should have got possession of Guadix.

This Abdallah was unwilling to do, and unable, even if he had been willing. Many of the boldest and fiercest of the Moorish soldiery had gathered in Granada, and the citizens themselves resolved to fight to the last. The *Algihed*, or holy war for the faith, was proclaimed, for the purpose of exciting the Moslems everywhere to take up arms against the Christians; bands of Moorish warriors came from all parts of the surrounding regions to assist in defending this beloved and beautiful city, the last they possessed; and it was expected that some of the African princes would send an army to its aid.

Ferdinand, on his part, neglected nothing that could conduce to success. In the spring of 1491 he assembled his army in the Val de Velillos for the purpose of making his final attack on Granada. This formidable host, numbering 50,000 foot and 10,000 horse, he led through the mountain passes to the vega, and encamped about five miles to the westward of the city. The beautiful plain was immediately laid waste by his troops, and what had once been a paradise became a desert. But the Spaniards did not succeed in effecting this without many an encounter which cost them thousands of lives. The Moorish forces were commanded by Musa ben Abul Gazan, a leader of great ability and daring. He was a man of high birth, of noble

bearing, and uncompromising patriotism ; and it is to him the defence of Granada owes its glory. He neglected no opportunity of attacking the Spaniards when he could do so to advantage ; and, while he performed the duties of a general, he also fought as a soldier at the head of his troops. But the enemy was brave and vigilant, and the numbers opposed to him far too great to admit of success crowning his efforts. During the siege the Christian camp was wholly destroyed by fire, and Queen Isabella ordered a town to be built in its place. The soldiers wished to call it after her ; but she declined the honour, and named it Santa Fé, or the town of the Holy Faith.

Instead of being dismayed at the destruction of their camp, the Spaniards proceeded to destroy the last little belt of orchards and gardens which still remained around the city, close to its walls. The Moors sallied out to meet them, and fought for a whole day with unexampled bravery and desperation ; but all in vain : they were at last compelled to take refuge within the city, which was wrapped in the smoke of her burning gardens. These were soon nothing but a blackened waste, covered with the bodies of the slain, and reddened with many a pool of blood.

After this sally, the Moors remained shut

up in the city, which soon began to suffer from famine. Their brethren in the mountains sent some cavalgadas of flocks and herds; but these were captured by the Spaniards, who had placed bodies of troops in every pass to cut off all supplies. The citizens and the king became alike despondent, and it was resolved that the hagib, Abul Cassim Abdelmelic, should proceed to the Christian camp, and ascertain what terms the Catholic sovereigns were disposed to grant. On his return, a full council was held in the great Audience Hall of the Alhambra, to consider the terms which he now laid before them. All present were filled with grief, and many wept at the downfall of their beloved city; but, seeing no way to avert it, they finally decided to surrender. Musa opposed this most strenuously to the last moment. He warned them of what they should suffer when once in the power of the Spaniards, and he urged them to make one more attempt in the field, and to die gloriously rather than submit. Finding his words of no avail, he withdrew from the hall, went to his dwelling, armed himself, mounted his favourite horse, and rode out of the city by the gate whence issued the road leading to Elvira. History is unable to reveal anything more concerning his fate.

The capitulation of Granada was signed on

the 25th of November, 1491 : the city was to be delivered up at the expiration of two months, unless relieved within that time ; but such was its miserable condition that, a few weeks afterwards, Abdallah, with the consent of his council, determined to surrender it before the time specified. This was done on the 4th of January, 1492. Thus ended the dominion of the Arabs in Spain, after it had continued almost eight hundred years.

It only remains to add that the articles of capitulation were grossly violated by Ferdinand. A short time after the fall of Granada, the persecutions and cruelties inflicted on the Moors drove them to revolt. Their chief stronghold was near the town of Monardo, on the rocky heights of the Sierra Bermeja. Here they defeated and destroyed a large Spanish force which was sent against them ; and their leader, Feri de ben Estepar, slew with his own hand Don Alonzo de Aguilar, the Spanish general, and one of the most noted heroes in the late war. They were, however, eventually suppressed, and more than a million and a half of them cruelly driven from the country and compelled to take refuge in Africa. Since that period Spain has lost her prestige and her strength, and has sunk to a humble place among the great nations of the earth.

GRANADA.

PART FIRST.

I.

THE assembled hosts of Christian Spain
Lay camped upon Granada's plain ;
Resolved to work the city's fall,
Or die beneath her hated wall.
The Moorish bands, from near and far,
Had gathered to the holy war ;
Forgetful of dissensions past,
They felt this struggle was their last,
And everything to which they clung
Upon the deadly issue hung ;
For with Granada should she fall,
King, throne, and country ; mosque, faith—all
That brave men love their own to call

Were ever lost to them ; and they,
To unbelieving foes a prey,
Forced to become apostate slaves,
Or, exiled, fill far distant graves.
“ God and his prophet ! ” ran the cry,
“ For Islam let us fight and die !
And cursed be he who shuns the strife,
Where more is gained, or lost, than life ;
His craven soul, whene’er he dies,
Shall be for torturing fiends a prize ;
And fiercer pains, and deeper woe,
Be his than unbelievers know ! ”

II.

From the high mountains near Guadix *
To Estepone and Almerie ;
From Ronda’s hills to Moxacar,†
With lance and shield and scimitar
They made them ready for the war.
The shepherd left his bleating flocks
Amid the Alpuxarras’‡ rocks ;
The hunter left his wounded prey,
And hastened to the deadly fray ;
The husbandman threw down his knife,
And seized a blade more fit for strife ;
The groom turned from his weeping bride,
And girt a sabre to his side ;

* Gwah-deeh’. † Mo-ha-car’. ‡ Ahl-poo-hah-ras.

And laughing maidens ceased to dance,
When heedless youths took up the lance,
And left for scenes where music's art
And manhood bore a different part.
From wild Axarquía's* summits came
Others more fit for war's rude game;
And Christians tremble yet to tell
What in those rugged glens befell;
When a whole army thither went,
On slaughter and fierce ravage bent;
And, venturing in the peasants' hold,
The mountain rocks upon them rolled,
Hurled downwards with cyclopean force,
Resistless crushing man and horse;
Till one confused and mangled mass
Had well-nigh choked the fatal pass;
And few returned of all that host
Which late was Antequera's boast.
But when within her lofty wall
Granada had assembled all
The remnants of that chivalry
Which conquered Spain from sea to sea—
How small the number to oppose
To such a host of Christian foes!—
How small the number—but how well
They fought and died let history tell.

* Ah-har'-kee-ah.

III.

Seven hundred years had passed away
Since Abderahman's glorious sway,
The first in Cordova who sat,
Head of the western caliphate ;
To whom, if chronicles are true,
The Christian kings paid tribute due ;
That glorious time when Moslem swords
Smote Charlemagne's ferocious hordes,
Which, thick as snow-flakes in the breeze,
Came sweeping o'er the Pyrenees ;
But, like those flakes on sunny plain,
They melted on the fields of Spain.
From him succeeding monarchs sprung,
With whose exploits the world has rung,
Which lent new lustre to that line
Graced with authority divine.
But when Ommiyah's race was done
The tide of conquest ceased to run ;
And glorious war no more was waged,
Where fierce, internal discord raged ;
And struggling rivals ruin wrought,
And Moslem against Moslem fought,
Wasting in mutual strife their strength,
To fall a common prey at length
To foes whose glories soon had set,
If by united Islam met.

Thus year by year, and day by day,
Were towns and cities lopped away ;
The hated but advancing cross
Marked more than one fair kingdom's loss.
Toledo and Valencia fell,
And Cordova was lost as well,
When Aben Hud seized on the throne
Which caliphs once had filled alone.
But still one glorious state remained
O'er which a Moorish monarch reigned
In all the splendour that became
Sovereign of Moslem race and name,
Amid an earthly paradise
No Christian yet had made his prize.
Beloved Granada ! woe the day
She fell beneath their hated sway ;
And woe to those whose crimes forecast
And wrought her downfall at the last !
Her sons abhorred the Christian yoke,
And long her power remained unbroke ;
'Neath twenty kings she held her own,
Till rival traitors sought her throne,
And factious strife her vitals tore,
And then she sank to rise no more.
Beloved Granada ! woe the day
She fell beneath the Christian sway ;
And woe to those whose crimes forecast
And wrought her downfall at the last !

IV.

The Moors in many a gallant band
Had met the Chistians hand to hand,
And inch by inch fought for their land ;
Till now, within the city pent,
Protecting wall and battlement
Alone kept back the eager foe,
And stayed awhile the final blow.
Hope to despondency gave place—
The dreaded issue came apace ;
And their sad looks too well expressed
The dark forebodings of each breast.
Some, fate-struck, yielded to despair,
Others to Allah knelt in prayer ;
The stoutest hearts oft shrank to hear
The sounds that fell upon the ear—
The wail of women for the dead,
And children's piteous cries for bread.
For now an enemy arose
More dreaded than the outward foes ;
One against whom of no avail
Were glittering lance and burnished mail ;
Whose presence made the boldest cower,
And the strong arm deprived of power :
With hollow cheek and wasted frame
He could the fiercest warriors tame ;
And those once eager for the fray,
Made murmur where they should obey.

V.

The rabble throng, for outbreak keen,
With tumult filled the Albaycin ;
Ever the first their strength to vaunt,
Let but disaster come, or want,
They turn on those who have them led,
Or basely sell themselves for bread.
Not so the brave, and there were some,
No matter what event might come,
With souls unshaken as at first,
Fought on, and let Fate do her worst ;
Resolved, howe'er might end the strife,
On blow for blow and life for life.
They made no vain and empty boast ;
But few among the Christian host
Had dared to meet them hand to hand
In equal conflict for their land.
Their ranks were thinned from day to day ;
But still they kept the foe at bay :
Scarce hope of victory remained—
Their utmost efforts nothing gained ;
And yet they fought with all the fire
That hope and victory inspire.
When pressed upon the deadly field
By thronging foes, they scorned to yield ;
And, fighting fiercely to the last,
Quarter they neither gave nor asked ;
But struck for vengeance and the past.

VI.

Bravest, and ever in the van
Of these, was Musa ben Gazan ;
No abler or more daring chief
Gave Christian foemen cause of grief ;
Where'er his fiery charger rushed,
The opposing hostile ranks were crushed ;
Wherever flashed his scimitar,
Around that spot raged fiercest war ;
Wherever girt by foes he stood,
The ground ran red with Christian blood ;
Wherever, o'er the din and noise
Of battle, rose his lofty voice,
They little cause had to rejoice.
Their bravest felt a thrill of fear
When the much-dreaded chief drew near ;
And, if they tried his course to stay,
Through thickest ranks he cut his way ;
Supported by his gallant band,
The last defenders of their land,
Who, fighting bravely by his side,
The efforts of the foe defied ;
And Christian corses, where they fell,
His track across the field would tell.
All that the utmost brave could do
Was done by these, his gallant few ;
But they had fallen one by one,
Till he was left almost alone ;

And, like the less courageous crowd,
To stern necessity he bowed,
So far as keep within the gate—
Resolved to share the city's fate,
And drive the foe back from her wall ;
Or in one glorious effort fall.

PART SECOND.

I.

CO-EVAL with Granada's state
The proud Alhambra hath its date ;
Founded by him, the first and best
That there the royal name possessed ;
At once a palace and a fort—
The monarch's stronghold and his court,
Though ruthless war, and vandal hands,
And wasting time, and Frankish bands,
Have done their wonted work ; yet still,
It rises o'er Granada's hill,
And from its height looks proudly down—
The guard and glory of the town.
But there no more in splendour reign
The sons of those who conquered Spain ;
And there no more do turbaned hosts
Ride forth to silence Christian boasts ;
And there no more at close of day
The children of the prophet pray.

The courts in which they knelt to God
By Moslem feet are now untrod ;
And from the battlements on high,
No more doth Moslem standard fly,
And proudly Christian strength defy.] + +

II.

You may wander at will through the lofty hall,
And the harem chambers are free to all ;
Explore, unhindered, each gay alcove,
Each gilded court, and neglected grove ;
You may seek the gardens at eve or dawn—
The fountains are there, but the nymphs are gone ;
You may listen in vain for music's sound
In the saddening silence that reigns around ;
And the royal chambers are dark at night,
Where a thousand silver lamps shone bright ;
And the guard is gone from the ruined tower ;
And beauty hath fled from her broken bower ;
And desolation and decay
Have fixed upon their destined prey,
Since the proud Moslem passed away.

III.

Though high doth rise the Alhambra's hill,
A neighbouring summit, higher still,
Adorned with terraces and bowers,
Looks down upon its ruddy towers.

Here was the monarch's cool retreat
From parching winds and summer heat ;
And here, mid these delightful groves,
A queen indulged unholy loves ;
And here, upon her faithless breast
The favoured lover was caressed ;
Too dearly was their bliss enjoyed—
That love a noble race destroyed ;
The jealous king, in vengeful mood,
Shed the Abencerrages' blood.

IV.

Above, a winding path doth creep
To the high summit of the steep.
O Heaven ! how beautiful and fair
The scene that greets the eye from there !
A lovely plain lies spread below,
Girdled by mountains crowned with snow ;
Its surface like an emerald gleams,
Bright with a thousand silver streams ;
And countless gardens, groves, and bowers,
And fields and foliage, fruits and flowers,
Fill the beholder with delight,
A very Eden to the sight.
There, the pomegranate, tinged with red,
Its flowering branches wide doth spread ;
The myrtle, fadeless there, perfumes
The gardens where the almond blooms ;

Beside the olive's dusky green,
The citron and the fig are seen ;
The golden orange scents the air ;
And vines their luscious clusters bear ;
And the rose, the queen of flowers,
Flourishes amid the bowers :
If earth contains a paradise,
It is beneath Granada's skies.] +
But all was now laid waste and bare ;
For the spoiler's bands were there :
That terrible and bloody day—
When last the Moslems sought the fray,
And fought like tigers o'er their prey,
For their gardens and their groves,
Scenes of their childhood and their loves—
Saw their fading hopes expire,
And the vega burnt with fire.

V.

There, the Moorish king would go,
And survey the siege below ;
Thence he had seen, time and again,
His troops forced back upon the plain
With wasted ranks—unfit to cope
With numbers full of strength and hope ;
Until, too weak to take the field,
Their walls alone protection yield.
And now, when iron famine pressed,
And hope grew faint in every breast,

There, in a rude and rock-hewn throne,
Hour after hour he sat alone,
Gazing round with anxious eye,
Sign of succour to espy—
He sought in vain, for none was nigh.
On his vision frequent broke
Rising clouds of dusky smoke ;
But 'twas where Moorish hamlets blazed
With fires the cruel foe had raised.
On yon hill-side something gleams,
Glittering in the sunny beams,
Winding down the rocky glen—
'Tis a host of armed men !
Boldly marching, void of fear,
To the city they draw near ;
Now they halt upon the hill ;
He hears their trumpet loud and shrill,
And his breath comes thick and fast—
But, ah ! 'tis not a Moorish blast.

VI.

Sick at heart, he now looks down
On Granada's fated town ;
Now upon her wasted plain,
Covered with the hosts of Spain ;
He could see their fair array,
Their banners and their pennons gay,
Glittering in the beam of day.

All along the swift Xenil,*
There were lines of glistening steel ;
There were fort and palisade,
Where the culverin was laid ;
Trench and battery stretched around,
Wheresoe'er the foe held ground.
From the camp of Santa Fé,
Where the Christian army lay,
Far their lengthened lines extend,
To where the plain and mountain blend ;
Many a mile, from left to right,
Hostile banners met his sight ;
On every hill and rising ground
Hostile lances gleamed around ;
In every seeming path was laid
Unseen, the deadly ambuscade.
Sixty thousand foot and horse,
Was the Christian monarch's force ;
All the chivalry of Spain
Were assembled on that plain,
Ne'er to leave Granada's wall,
Until they had wrought her fall.
Woe is me ! and woe the day
That first provoked the fatal fray !

VII.

In that famed hall, in which of old
Granada's kings were wont to hold

* Hā-neel'.

Their royal court in lofty state,
And grant high audience to the great ;
There, on that proud but fated throne,—
Which, once his father's, now his own,
The blood-stained and rebellious son
By treason from his parent won,—
Abdallah sat, in pomp arrayed,
With robes of gem-enriched brocade.
Before him in due order stand,
Summoned by his high command,
The wisest of Granada's land,
The bravest of her warrior band ;
Vizier and sage and alfaqui,
Alcaid and chief of high degree,
All skilled in war, in council wise,
With whom the monarch might advise.
In silence each assumed his place,
And gloom was seen on every face ;
For well they knew the end was near
Which all foresaw, yet viewed with fear ;
And in the council of that court,
For life or death, their last resort.

VIII.

The king himself with grief oppressed,
Sat with his head upon his breast,
Forgetting, in his present woe,
His wonted pride and love of show.

He spoke not till some time had passed ;
Rousing himself, he said at last,
" Bravely in battle hath each son
Of Mahomet his duty done ;
But to them Allah hath not given
The victory for which they've striven ;
Else were the unbelieving hordes
Destroyed by faithful Moslems' swords.
Granada's best and bravest lie
On fields from which they scorned to fly ;
For bread her famished children cry ;
The foe is thundering at the gate ;
Speak ! what shall be the city's fate ?
Is there one yet untried resource
To free her from the leaguering force—
One effort that can yet be made
With hope of victory to aid ?
Or, must her ancient glories end,
And she, at last to Christians bend ?
Your counsel shall decide her fate—
To yield, or the assault await."

IX.

With drooping head and quivering cheek,
Silent they stood, and feared to speak ;
They had done all that men could do,
And they had failed. A hopeless few
Alone remained of all the brave
Who fought the fated town to save ;

The rest had fallen on the plain,
Still strewn with the unburied slain.
Though for Granada and their faith
They would have rushed to certain death,
The desperate act would not avail—
Where all had failed, the few *must* fail.
Their feeble efforts at the most,
Could scarce keep back the Christian host—
Though with despair they fought—one hour,
But for protecting wall and tower ;
By these alone with few to aid,
The dread assault had been delayed ;
But well the stern besiegers knew
What famine and defeat can do.
A while, perhaps, a desperate throng
The hopeless struggle might prolong—
And little recked they of their lives ;
But they had daughters, sisters, wives,
Who better with the dead were laid
Before the rude assault was made—
And these, even now, were pinched for bread.
Of their own wants they little said ;
But useless were the famished frame
When the dread hour of conflict came.
And now, of all resource bereft,
Without a hope of succour left,
And with a fierce o'erwhelming foe
Ready to strike the final blow,

And pour through breachèd wall and gate,—
What else remained but yield to fate!
Even now, they heard, while brooding o'er
These gloomy thoughts, the lombard's roar
Time after time burst on the ear,
To warn them that the end was near—
While here and there from tower and wall,
Ribadoquin sent answering ball—
And if they shook 'twas not from fear ;
But the heart-thrill of agony
For those who could not fight nor fly ;
The hero's death they must forego
To save *them* from the brutal foe ;
Their last resort—their only shield,
Was in the bitter words, " We yield."
But long these words remained unspoke ;
And when, at last, their utterance broke
The silence which had sealed their grief,
Their pent-up feelings found relief.
As sudden gust of autumn breeze
Stirs the dead leaves and shakes the trees ;
As sudden as the rain-drops fall,
From the black thunder's flying pall,
Tears burst from some, and sobs from all.
Granada's doom was sealed : and now
It but remained for them to bow
As suppliants to the hated foe
For aught of grace he might bestow.

X.

But one alone, with soul unmoved,
The weakness of the rest reproved,—
If weakness it were right to call
Feelings that fill and govern all.
'Twas Mûsa : he had stood alone,
Silent and stern, as made of stone ;
Whatever anguish wrung his soul,
That iron will could still control ;
And hide beneath unaltered mien,
The agony he wished unseen.
The high resolve, the haughty pride,
With which he first the foe defied,
He still retained ; though day by day
His strength was weakened in the fray ;
And fought, despite of adverse fate,
With fiercer and more bitter hate.

XI.

“ Why speak of yielding to the foe,
Whilst we have strength to strike a blow !
'Tis time enough, when *all* is lost,
To purchase life at such a cost.
What can ye hope from Christian grace
That your lost honour will replace !
Your country gone—what would ye save ?
Your lives ? they spare but to enslave.
Guadix and Malaga too well
What Christian mercy is can tell—

What grace they grant—what faith they keep—
What peace is found in dungeons deep :
Accursèd race; their faith is breath—
The only grace they grant is death.
The tongues that best for mercy plead
Are those which make their bravest bleed :
Despair doth wield a keener blade
Than ever came to fortune's aid ;
And oft, where strength and numbers failed,
Its fearless efforts have prevailed.
If, then, for favour ye would pray,
Follow where I will lead the way ;
And many a Christian's dying groan
Your prayer for mercy shall make known."
He ended ; but his words fell dead
On men from whom all hope had fled—
Heart-broken, passive, 'twas too late
To rouse them now to strive 'gainst fate ;
Their strength was gone, their souls subdued,
They silent and dejected stood.
Abdallah scanned each face with care ;
He saw but grief and blank despair ;
"Surrender" was the only word
That from the quivering lips he heard.

XII.

The scroll before the king was laid :
"Be Allah's holy will obeyed !"

He said, and took the pen to sign ;
But ere he traced the fatal line,
From the grief-struck and weeping crowd,
A wild and hollow voice cried loud,—
“ Sign not ! nor place beyond recall
The act that seals Granada’s fall—
Sign not ! or all of Moslem faith,
Thou giv’st to slavery and death.”

XIII.

Abdallah heard the strange command,
And let the pen fall from his hand ;
The startled courtiers round them gazed
In search of him whose voice was raised ;
When, through the awe-struck, wondering throng,
An aged dervise passed along,
And stood before the monarch’s throne
With bearing loftier than his own.
No staff lent him supporting aid,
Or aught of feebleness betrayed ;
That withered frame derived its force
From other than an earthly source ;
That glowing eye and wasted cheek
Of midnight prayer and vision speak ;
That flowing beard, now white with age,
Showed him a holy man and sage ;
Long were his locks of matted hair ;
His garb was poor, his feet were bare ;

His tunic, reaching to the ground,
Was with a faded girdle bound ;
And over this a mantle flung
In careless folds about him hung.
The startled crowd had moved a space
To give the strange intruder place ;
And now, with curious eyes, they scan
The bearing of the holy man ;
For such they knew him well to be,
Though seldom 'mong his kind came he ;
But lonely dwelt apart with God,—
In mountain wilds by man untrod,—
Who oft to him, in secret cave,
Dread visions of the future gave ;
And at his holy prayers revealed
Things which from others he concealed.
'Twas even said he durst explore
The depths of necromantic lore,
And learned within his lonely cell
The power of talisman and spell ;
And knew the words that could command
The genii of the sea and land :
Such was the holy man they saw—
The santon, Hamet ben Zarrax.*

XIV.

No homage to the king he paid,
Nor gesture of obeisance made ;

* Thar-rah'.

But those wild eyes upon him turned,
That like to glowing embers burned ;
And stretching forth his withered hand,
He spake as one that would command :
“ Sign not ! nor place beyond recall
The act that ‘seals thy kingdom’s fall—
Sign not ! or all of Moslem faith,
Thou giv’st to slavery and death.
O king Abdallah, ’tis to thee
Granada owes her misery !
’Tis thou, not Fate, these foes hast brought,
’Gainst whom her sons in vain have fought ;
On thy head must the guilt be laid,
Who first the Moslem cause betrayed,
When thou against thy father rose,
And leagued thee with Granada’s foes :
Her unity and many a life
She lost in that accursèd strife.
Thou triumphd’st in a luckless hour—
A king with scarce a shade of power ;
Possessor of a vassal throne
Thou could’st no longer call thine own.
When, for the Christian monarch’s grace
And aid to win the royal place,
Thou gav’st in pledge both land and race,
Thou purchas’d at a fatal cost
What gained, in being gained, was lost.
Too well the learned and the wise
Read, at thy birth, the warning skies ;

And in the stars' portentous ray
Beheld the kingdom pass away :
For thus doth Allah oft foreshow
The future he alone doth know ;
And indicate the chosen course
Man takes of his own will and force.
The evils at thy birth begun,
Wider and deeper still have run ;
And soon, unless the tide be stayed,
The ruin will be past all aid.
Granada trembles now before
The Christian foes she scorned of yore ;
And, if she fall, thy wretched name
Shall be for ever linked with shame.
But know, it is not yet too late
To save her from impending fate ;
If faithful Moslem but succeed
In doing one adventurous deed.

XV.

“ There is, O king, a priceless stone,
Graven with characters unknown,
A genie found in a wondrous cave
Deep buried beneath the ocean wave—
To Solomon the Wise he gave ;
For he alone had skill to scan,
And understand that talisman ;
And its dread power aright employ,
Which doth in feeble hands destroy,

And, in its fatal action still,
Work its untaught possessor ill.
Better had died in natal hour
The wretch who tampers with its power !
Brief his success, and dread the fate,
That overtakes him soon or late ;
And hence this talismanic stone
Is by the name of Hormah known.
Though fatal to the wretch untaught,
The wise king with it wonders wrought ;
And, safe himself, whene'er he chose,
Brought down destruction on his foes.
A tower was built at his command,
By genii in this western land,
To store those countless treasures he
Had got from mountain, cave, and sea ;
And talisman and seal and sign,—
All things of power, good and malign,
That necromantic wonder wrought,
From the far east were hither brought ;
And with the rest this fatal stone,
Since by the name of Hormah known.

XVI.

“ While he with his forefathers slept,
Their watch the guardian genii kept,
Till nigh two thousand years had passed ;
When, in that hour by Fate forecast,

He whom the Christians Roderic call,
Presumptuous, sought the enchanted hall,
And wrought his own—his kingdom's fall.
It was to please that harlot fair,
Who wished the beauteous gem to wear ;
And this alone of all he sought
From the enchanted tower he brought :
How fearful was the penalty
He paid, O king, is known to thee.
La Caba got the magic stone,—
Her wretched fate is also known ;
Her father, whom the Christians curse,
Count Julian's fearful death was worse.
To Musa ben Nosier it went,
A gift by the arch-traitor sent :
Its wonted power with him held good—
At first a conqueror he stood,
The end was Abdelasis' blood.
'Twas placed among the treasures rare
Which Musa to the caliph bare ;
Ommiyah's glorious line possessed
The stone so splendid but unblest :
The caliph died. Thou know'st the rest :
What wars were fought—what blood was spilt—
What deeds were done of deepest guilt ;
Till Merwan, of Ommiyah's race
The last that filled the caliph's place,
Perished when Abul Abbas came
To seize the holy throne and name.

XVII.

" I need not tell how once again
The talisman was brought to Spain,
And lost when Cordova was ta'en ;
But there the stone doth still remain—
Its history and its power unknown
To all, O king, save me alone.
And I have travelled near and far,
Consulting sign and scroll and star,
In cave and wild, ere these I learned,
Or yet its present place discerned.
To Cordova, with this intent,
My weary steps I lately bent ;
I've in the Christian temple been,
And the great talisman I've seen ;
The woman-saint to whom they bow
Doth wear it as a necklace now.
Possessed of it, I have the skill
To blast the Christian host at will ;
But unpropitious was the hour,
And Fate denied to me the power
To seize and bear away that gem,
Which once decked Azrael's diadem.
Lives there but one dares undertake
To win it for Granada's sake ?
Yet dangers dread attend the task—
To him unknown—which here I ask.

If got, still hard 'twere to succeed ;
For, pressed, he must rely on speed,
Nor trust to weapons sure to fail—
His foe, predestined, shall prevail ;
And thus our final hopes be crossed,
Granada fall, and all be lost."

XVIII.

Soon as he ended, Musa spoke :
"Wear, if ye will, the Christian yoke ;
Yield ye the town, then meekly take
Your way to dungeon, chain, and stake ;
Whilst wives and daughters rend the air
With shrieks for insults which they bear.
For me—by Allah ! here I swear
Never on such a scene to look,
Nor Christian domination brook.
I go to seek the talisman,
And save Granada if I can ;
Whatever the result may be,
Better, far better, is to me
An unknown fate, a nameless grave,
Than life to be a Christian's slave."
This said, he turned away from all,
And proudly left the council hall.
Saluting none, he slowly strode,
Silent and stern, to his abode ;

He armed, and mounted his best steed,
Famous for strength and matchless speed,
And rode through the Elvira gate,
To seek alone his destined fate.

PART THIRD.

I.

JOY reigned in Cordova, and all
Spoke of Granada's coming fall ;
How that her bravest now were dead,
And hope from all the rest had fled ;
How famine reigned, and, forced by need,
How king Abdallah had agreed,
When two short months of grace were past,
If succoured not, to yield at last.
They gloried in the desperate fights,
And prowess of their valiant knights ;
And tales of their exploits were told,
Rivalling the famous deeds of old.
Some even said St. James again
Had led the bannered hosts of Spain ;
But most of all was victory owed
To her at whose command he rode—
To the Virgin, thrice-adored,
Mother of our blessed Lord.

II.

It was now Conception Day,
And the people came to pray,
Thankful to the Queen of Heaven
For the aid so kindly given ;
And the great cathedral church,
Filled from altar-rail to porch,
Showed the deep, religious zeal
They could in her service feel.
It was, I said, Conception Day,
And dazzling was the rich display
Of treasures on the altar placed—
Thus the services were graced.
From the sacristy were brought
Priceless vessels, rarely wrought
In graceful forms and wreaths enrolled,
Of virgin silver and of gold ;
And many a jewel there was laid,
A monarch's ransom might have paid ;
And there was many a costly gem,
Worth more than a whole diadem.

III.

From her throne in heaven above,
The Virgin bends with looks of love,
Listening to each grateful prayer,
Offered by her people there.

Pure and sinless from her birth,
She ne'er knew one taint of earth;
Now, in heaven enthroned, she shares
The honours which her God-son bears,
See her silver image shine—
Its face suffused with joy divine,
And her love-lit eyes the while
On her people seem to smile.
A gorgeous garment hangs around
Her graceful form, and sweeps the ground;
And feet and arms and head and neck
A thousand glittering jewels deck;
But all of these exceeding far,
In shape and lustre like a star,
Is that which mid-way on her breast,
Hung by a massive chain, doth rest.
No earthly gem, however bright,
Could glow with such effulgent light;
Its matchless splendours heaven might own
Amid the radiance of the throne.

IV.

Close beside the altar-rail,
At the margin of the pale,
Kneels a man, who, from his face,
Has surely sprung from Moorish race.
Bold and noble is his mien,
And his countenance serene,

Save when, perhaps, some painful thought
Hath passing shade of anguish brought :
His albornoz, around him rolled,
Hangs down in many a graceful fold ;
His manner, self-possessed, subdued,
Betokens deep religious mood ;
And ever on the Virgin's breast
His earnest gaze doth steadfast rest ;
As if in that sweet source of grace
His longing soul its hopes did place :
Thus he who doth exhausted sink
Close by the desert fountain's brink
Looks on the stream 'tis life to drink.
And doubtless, he is one of those
Gained lately from the broken foes—
Converted by the conquering sword
From the false prophet to our Lord ;
And having learned the better way,
Hath hither come for grace to pray—
Our blessed Lady be his stay ;
And so, though once an infidel,
He shall escape the fires of hell :
What *his* thoughts are I dare not tell.

For the hundredth vol. V.

[Seven hundred years ago,
Moslems bade this structure grow ;
The graven walls, the gilded roof,
Of their splendours are a proof ;

Arabesque and pictured stone
Speak of Moslem art alone ;
These mosaics, finely wrought,
Were designed by Moslem thought ;
Here a thousand columns stand,
Moslems brought from many a land—
Of marble and jasper and porphyry,
Precious all and fair to see ;
The very lamps that round thee shine
Were bells at St. Iago's shrine,
Which the glorious Almansor
Spoiled five hundred years before. ~
It is two, and little more,
Since Moslems knelt upon this floor,
And Moslem emblems o'er them shone—
Now the cross is seen alone ;
And a Christian multitude,
Foes to Islam and thy blood,
Worship here a fellow worm
In that jewelled silver form :
If thou hast aught of Moslem faith,
Moor, thou dost hate them to the death.

VI.

But he still keeps kneeling, gazing
On that gem so brightly blazing ;
While the worshippers, adoring,
Mary's favour are imploring ;

And the mighty organ, pealing,
Echoes back from dome and ceiling ;
And the youths are censers swinging ;
And the priestly choir is singing,
AVE SPEI DULCIS STELLA !
AVE DEI MATER ALMA !
SEMPER VIRGO, SEMPER PURA,
FELIX, SANCTA CÆLI PORTA.

VII.

The service ends ; and grave and slow,
In order from the altar go
The attendant priests : the most have passed,
When the Moor's eye attracts the last,
His finger raised ; the priest turns round,
And steps towards the chancel bound.
An aged man of heavy frame,
The Moor bent to him as he came,
And, with his hands upon his breast,
The reverend father thus addressed :
“ God, for their sins, hath laid his hand
Heavy upon the Moorish land ;
And that I once was of their faith,
Was cause that brought me nigh to death ;
And ever since, a maddening pain
Doth in my bosom here remain—
I've tried all remedies in vain ;
And by a holy hermit sent,
Hither, at last, my steps I've bent,

With offerings of my choicest wealth,
To seek relief and wonted health.
A trifling boon I ask alone—
Grant me one touch of yonder stone;
If that should fail, relief is none."

VIII.

In pity for the suppliant's pain,
He brought the jewel and the chain;
The bright gem as it trembling hung,
Its light in radiant flashes flung,
Dazzling as the resplendent beam
That in the mid-day heaven doth gleam.
Kind sympathy his face o'erspread,
And, as he held it forth, he said,
"Peace and health to thee belong,
As thy faith is pure and strong."
Free from guile and kind and bland,
He placed it in the sufferer's hand:
'Twas instant thrust beneath his vest,
And to his aching bosom pressed.
A miracle was surely wrought,
So quickly came the ease he sought;
His countenance at once grew bright,
His eyes were filled with joyful light:
"Father, it hath relieved my pain!
Permit that my own hand the chain,
And stone—that instrument of grace—
Restore unto their wonted place;

And, for the ease bestowed by Heaven,
Be this my humble offering given.
And from within his mantle's fold
He drew a store of gems and gold ;
Close to the altar he advanced ;
Then turned, and round the church he glanced ;
But few were there, and most of these
Were still upon their bended knees.
With seeming reverence displayed,
The gift he on the altar laid ;
The chain and stone, with joyful haste,
Then on the Virgin's neck replaced ;
And while the priest took up the store,
He vanished through the nearest door.

IX.

The sky, before so fair and bright,
Grew of a sudden black as night ;
The lightning flashed, the thunder rolled ;
'Tis said the bell of Velilla tolled ;
The building gave a sudden shake ;
The earth itself was felt to quake ;
The winds in hollow murmurs moaned ;
The blessed Virgin's image groaned.
Alarmed and speechless with surprise,
The priest now lifted up his eyes ;
Her placid face so sweet to see,
Was filled with nameless agony ;

He looked again—the gem was gone !
And in its place a worthless stone,
Graven with the words that tell
The false creed of the infidel ;
And the great imposter's name,
And his authority proclaim.
He stood a moment horrified,
Then with uplifted hands he cried,
“ The Moor hath stole the precious stone,
And left here blasphemy alone !”

X.

A cry of rage and horror rose—
They beat their breasts with frantic blows—
They wildly ran from aisle to aisle—
They searched in haste the empty pile—
They rushed without on flying feet—
They raised the outcry in the street—
They sought around—the Moor had gone
Ere the daring act was known ;
He had sprung upon his steed—
Standing ready at his need ;
Quickly o'er the bridge had passed,
Nor one glance behind him cast.

XI.

While the cry was at its height,
Forward rode a valiant knight,

One long famous near and far—
Don Alvaro de Bejar.*
How his breast with rage was stirred,
Ere in haste the half he heard ;
How his eye with fury burned,
When the whole he quickly learned :
Fierçely he clenched his naked hand,
More fiercely drew his glittering brand,
And, as he held it high, he sware,
“By the Virgin Mother fair,
By her pure and sinless birth,
By the blood that cleansed our earth,
I’ll pursue this infidel
To the very gates of hell—
Jesus Mary aid me well !”

XII.

The crowd gave way—the bridge was near
That spans the broad Guadalquivir ;†
The horse his master’s purpose knew
And o’er it like an arrow flew ;
His head and ears were forward thrust,
His rapid hoofs were hid in dust ;
Lighter than the summer wind,
Scarce a track he left behind.
So sped Don Alvaro on,
Nor asked the way the Moor had gone ;

* Bā-har’.

† Gwah-dal-ke-veer.

Men seemed to know why thus he rode,
And, pointing on, his course they showed :
Along the Guadajoz* it lay,
To lofty hills, whence, far away,
Like pearls against the sapphire skies,
Granada's snowy peaks arise.

XIII.

Many a rapid corredor
The Guadajoz had seen before ;
Many a wretch for life who fled ;
Many a foe who following sped ;
But never one that by its side
Could like the swift Alvaro ride ;
Nor courser that for wind and pace
Could equal his in rapid race.
Yet was he near to Alcalá
Ere the fugitive he saw,
As up a lofty hill he reined—
A distant glimpse was all he gained ;
The horse himself the Moslem knew,
And faster still, unurged, he flew.
More rugged now became the ground,
Broken hills rose all around ;
Though his steed so swiftly went,
Near another hour was spent,

* Gwah-da-hoth.

Ere the lessening distance grew
So that he kept him well in view.

XIV.

Scarce half a bow-shot now ahead,
On the rapid Moslem sped ;
Yet rode he not like one that fled.
Don Alvaro marked him well :
By his bearing he could tell,
When he closely came to scan,
He beheld no common man ;
Yet the Moor no armour wore,
Nor a single weapon bore,
To defend or to assail—
Neither sword nor shield nor mail ;
But better steed was ne'er bestrode
Than that which bore him on the road.

XV.

Don Alvaro, too, was light ;
Not a weapon had the knight,
Save his good Toledo blade ;
His only shield was the Virgin's aid.
He would have scorned to strike a foe
Unable to return his blow ;
But this accursed infidel
Was only fit for deepest hell—
He gave a loud triumphant yell ;
His horse, with many a mighty bound,

Sprang o'er the intervening ground—
The Moslem never looked around.
He must have heard the clattering noise,
He must have heard Alvaro's voice ;
And none that cry of rage could hear,
But must have felt his end was near—
And yet he showed no sign of fear.
Only one hand his steed caressed,
With touch almost as light as air,
As mothers touch an infant's hair :
The noble Arab forward pressed,
As with instinctive knowledge blessed.

XVI.

And now, so swiftly on they go,
Their former rapid pace seemed slow.
Never had Don Alvaro's horse—
Light of foot and fleet in course—
Met his match for wind and force ;
Never had the Arab steed
Found his mate in furious speed—
He was of the Anasseh breed.
Never riders so bestrode
The noble forms on which they rode ;
They spring—they bound—they leap—they run ;
Horse and rider seem but one :
Thus the flying shaft doth bear
The plume that guides it through the air.

XVII.

From tower and wall, from rock and height,
Men saw, and watched them in their flight ;
And wondered at their reckless pace,
And why they rode the desperate race.
While yet each eye was on them bent,
They came—they passed—and onward went ;
Nor more the wondering gazers knew,
Than Moor and Christian were the two.
Some who saw them yet afar
Stood prepared the way to bar ;
Many a knight his charger stayed,
And couched his lance or grasped his blade ;
Ready, if either proved a foe,
As he passed to lay him low.
But when an unarmed man drew near,
Down went sword and lance and spear—
None would check his safe career.
But one alone in thoughtless haste
His wonted chivalry disgraced ;
And made to strike ; but, bending low,
The Moslem scaped the intended blow.
Not so the baser sort, who ne'er
One generous impulse in them bear :
A maddened Moor, who'd lost his flocks,
Shot with his cross-bow from the rocks ;
But, ere the quarrel reached the knight,
He had passed in rapid flight ;

And of the Spaniards not a few
Their bows against the Moslem drew—
He swifter than their arrows flew.

XVIII.

The sun was sinking in the west,
And each steed was at his best ;
'Twas now a wild and phrensied pace,
Like hunted deer that flee the chase—
Neither gained nor lost the race.
Still Don Alvaro's horse held good ;
He was of Andalusian blood,
And bred in Cordova's famed stud.
His spirit rose each moment higher,
His glowing eye was red with fire ;
Full of strength and full of pride,
Fatigue and effort he defied ;
Maddened at the Arab's lead,
Of no urging he had need—
He made one burst of utmost speed ;
He had, perhaps, the greater strength—
The effort gained him thrice his length.
The Arab heard the quickening sound ;
He pricked his ears and looked around,
With further stretch and swifter bound,
Away—away ! he holds his own ;
The Cordovese his best has shown.

XIX.

Illora now before them lies,
And now behind them quickly flies ;
The sun, long since, had sunk from sight ;
The mountain depths were hid in night,
Save where the crescent moon's soft beam
Faintly illumined slope and stream.
Alvaro felt his chance would last
But till the mountain ridge she passed ;
For, when a cloud obscured her glow,
He scarcely could discern his foe.
The Moslem better knew the ground,
And every road and path around ;
And, if he could no nearer get,
Might in the darkness scape him yet.
He used the spur—his horse went wild ;
The Moslem looked around and smiled :
Alvaro saw him distance gain ;
It filled him with a maddening pain ;
In very agony he prayed
For the blessèd Virgin's aid ;
And his horse as if indued
With freshened powers, the race renewed.
So quick his stretch and light his bound,
He scarcely seemed to touch the ground :
With the white foam upon his side,
And crimson nostril open wide,

And eyes that seemed to flash with flame,
Like the swift arrow to its aim,
He close upon the Moslem came.
Alvaro drew his glittering blade
To take the vengeance long delayed ;
But scarce it caught the moon's bright ray
Than darting from his stroke away,
And now some twenty lengths ahead,
With hoof as light the Arab sped.
It seemed as he instinctive felt
His rider's safety with him dwelt ;
Unpricked by spur, unurged by rein,
His distance he made good again ;
His graceful head far forward thrown,
Still undistressed he held his own—
Never was courser seen so fleet.
The Moslem calmly kept his seat,
Nor glance at his pursuer turned :
With baffled rage Alvaro burned ;
His horse he goaded yet more deep ;
Forward he sprang with flying leap ;
Closer and closer still he pressed—
The Moor again his steed caressed ;
He for a moment, fixed his eye
On the bright crescent in the sky,
Then bent him to his horse's ear
And whispered—doubtless words of cheer—
Alvaro got no further near.

The horses each his pace held good ;
Their sides were flecked with foam and blood ;
The Christian spurred his charger sore,
But still the Arab kept before ;
The Moor once more his steed caressed,
But still Alvaro closely pressed ;
Nor slacked they speed, nor drew they rein,
Until they reached Granada's plain.

PART FOURTH.

✓ The Vega.

I.

MANY a league from end to end
That lovely vega doth extend ;
Many a mile from side to side
Its fair expanse doth open wide,
Engirt by mountain walls that bound
The glorious landscape spread around,
Which, canopied by cloudless skies,
A scene of matchless beauty lies,
Where Nature hath with lavish hand
Strewed all the gifts at her command ;
And fruits and flowers of every clime
Spontaneous revel in their prime ;
And all around, below, above,
Seems formed for beauty, peace, and love.
Alas, that ever ruthless war
So fair a spot of earth should mar !
Or that an Eden such as this
Should witness aught but scenes of bliss !
Here, where a thousand fragrant flowers
Adorn the shady, vine-clad bowers ;

Here, where the nightingale's soft note
Doth on the perfumed zephyr float ;
And where the lover's lute alone
Should breathe the only passion known.
Yet of the vega, not a rood
But hath been drenched with Moorish blood ;
Nor is there rock or height around
That hath not rung with battle's sound.
The last of that heroic race
Here made their chosen dwelling-place ;
And here, for centuries, defied
Their ancient foemen's strength and pride.
Many and many a time again
Had Christians sought to reach that plain,
And found their utmost efforts vain ;
And many a valiant man lay dead
Before their tents were on it spread.
But discord brought the unhappy hour
Deprived the Moslem arm of power ;
The fatal issue, long forecast,
In common ruin came at last ; □
And now, it but remains to tell
What happened ere Granada fell.

II.

The Spaniards, certain of their prey,
Close to the Moorish city lay—
Waiting, now her fate was sealed,
The time when she at last must yield.

They kept rigid watch and ward,

Every pathway had its guard;

Every road was made secure
'Gainst all efforts of the Moor ;
Not a trumpet blast was blown,
But they instant caught the tone ;
Not a banner waved its fold,
But their keen eyes would behold ;

Omitted by the Press.

It is said while yet the moon shone bright
Above the western hills of Spain,
The fleeing Moor and Christian knight
Were seen upon Granada's plain ;
As cloud that follows after cloud,
Borne by the same continuous blast—
Nor varying speed nor course allowed,
So the two horsemen onward passed ;
And, ere those who beheld them knew,
Were in the distance lost to view.
Whether the bold Moslem tried
Through the leaguering host to ride
With the talismanic stone,
History doth not make known ;
Or whether his swift course he bent
Up the Darro, with intent
To meet the hermit in his cave,
And Granada thus to save—
Howe'er it was, the Christian knight
Never gave him rest from flight ;

Whatsoever road he strook,
That his fierce pursuer took ;
But never, in the haunts of men,
Was Moor or Christian seen again ;
Save, as I will hereafter state,
Which only legend doth relate.

IV.

That night within Granada rose
Sounds which alarmed her watchful foes—
The clash of cymbals, and the beat
Of drums, and heavy tramp of feet ;
And the shrill trumpet's echoing call,
And deep tones of the atabal ;
And frequent shouts the ear would greet,
And torches flashed in many a street,
And o'er the Alhambra's lofty towers,
And 'mid the Generalife's* bowers,
And on the Alcazaba's height,
Flickered many a gleaming light ;
And lamps, on minaret and wall,
Shone as for Bairam festival.
From the crowded Zacatin,
Rose a loud and ceaseless din ;
The Vivarambla was ablaze
With unnumbered torches' rays ;
While from roof and lattice gaze

* Hā-neh-rah-lee'fā.

Dark-eyed dames and maidens fair
On the thousands gathered there,
In that great and famous square ;
Whence Granada oft had seen
Her sons, when happier days had been,
With glittering lance and sabre keen,
Ride forth to meet and overthrow
Her now, alas ! much-dreaded foe.

V.

To Santa Fé they brought the word,
The camp was with commotion stirred ;
The king, who had retired to rest,
Rose, and resumed his mailed vest,
The guards the slumbering soldiers woke :
But no loud sound the silence broke :
The whispered call was, " At command,
Be ready, with your arms in hand."
All felt there was some danger near,
But yet they knew not what to fear ;
Each one his comrade's face would scan,
And many a startling rumour ran ;
Among the rest, howe'er it rose—
Though none the cause could well disclose—
'Twas said that from the Afric shore
A host of Moslems had crossed o'er,
As under Taric once before ;
And, unseen, come to men's surprise,
As they had fallen from the skies ;

And that a Moorish corredor,
Who tidings to Granada bore,
Had crossed the plain an hour before—
Closely followed by a knight,
Who sought to slay him in his flight ;
Lest, by knowledge of this aid,
Granada's fall should be delayed ;
Or, worse, perhaps for ever stayed.
And, to the city, it was thought
The news had been already brought,
Which made their Moorish foes rejoice ;
And hence the unwonted lights and noise.
Some even said the Moslem horse
Were now advancing in full force
By way of Loxa,* and so near,
They soon would fall upon their rear :
The story as it quickly spread
Filled many a heart with secret dread.

VI.

A restless charger shrilly neighed ;
His fellows, suddenly afraid,
Broke loose in a wild escapade ;
Each soldier quickly grasped his blade,
Thinking the foe his onset made.
The camp was filled with wild alarms—
They rushed without and stood to arms :

* Lo'-ha.

Soon from Illora's rocky height
There rose a burst of blazing light :
From Loxa, too, by which the way
That led into the vega lay,
The startling signal also sped—
A warning glow its watch-tower shed ;
And nearer, from Elvira's hill,
A bright glare fell on stream and rill.
High on their right, near Alhendin,
Another baleful blaze was seen ;
From hill to hill, from peak to peak,
The ruddy flames of danger speak ;
On every height a fire was raised,
And every atalaya blazed ;
Wider and wider still they spread,
Till all the sky was wrapped in red ;
And a beauteous crimson glow
Tinged the Sierra's peaks of snow.

VII.

The Moors, from many a mountain height—
Where, when defeated on the plain,
Like eagles, they had refuge ta'en—
Beheld, and wondered at the sight ;
And kindled bale-fires, too, that night ;
And spread the wild alarum far ;
And seizing lance and scimitar,
They watched each pass by which the foe
Might reach them from the plain below.

Whene'er a warning signal blazed,
An answering flame they quickly raised ;
And so it spread on every hand,
Till bale-fires blazed o'er all the land,
From the Sierra of Guadix
To Salobreña by the sea.
The watchful Spanish sentinel
From high Alhama marked them well—
The unknown cause he could not tell ;
That there was danger he discerned——
His signal also quickly burned.
And thus, unknowing what it meant,
The alarm to distant Ronda went ;
Where, from the Giralda of Seville,
Was seen the ruddy light of ill.

VIII.

Meanwhile, to Cordova, too, came,
By Alcalá, the warning flame ;
And, whereso'er its light was shed,
The people felt a sudden dread.
Some said the Moorish mountaineers
Had seized again their glittering spears ;
And, while Granada occupied
The Christians and their arms defied,
They boldly now a tala tried.
Some told a still more fearful tale,
Which made men tremble and turn pale ;
They said 'twas for a subtle stroke

Granada of surrender spoke,
Only the Christian host to lure
To carelessness—a prey more sure ;
And that the faithless race accursed
Had from the city sudden burst
In the dead silence of the night,
Nor time for arming nor for flight
Given to those at Santa Fé,
Had slain them as they sleeping lay ;
And now with fire and sword they came
To give to slaughter and to flame
Whatever bore the Christian name.

IX.

The spreading fires confirm the fear
With which this startling tale they hear ;
And in the troubled heaven were seen
Things men mock at, but which *have* been ;
Such as portentous Fate doth send
When kingdoms fall and empires end.
Two armies formed of vivid flame
Against each other fiercely came ;
The flickering lights in one reveal
The tower-charged banner of Castile ;
Triumphant it advanced at first—
Its light in dazzling splendours burst ;
Brighter and brighter still it glows,
While pale the visionary foes,
Who, as if beaten in the fray,

Retire, and at a distant stay ;
But scarcely had they gone away,
When the bright banner showed decay ;
And *they* shone with fierce lurid light,
While *it* was hid in mist and night——
The gazers trembled at the sight ;
And, when the vision died in air,
There rose a cry of wild despair :
Such warning was not sent in vain
To mark the future fall of Spain.
Alarm and terror filled the land,
They thought the Moslem foe at hand ;
And women to their husbands clung,
And children round their mothers hung,
And men, unmoved when death was near,
Now trembled, and betrayed their fear.
Some fled before the unseen foe,
Some wrung their hands in silent woe,
And many knelt, God to implore,
And prayed as they ne'er prayed before :
Such night of terror and dismay
Spain knew not since that fatal day,
When her assembled strength and pride
Fell by the Guadalete's side.

X.

Meanwhile, upon Granada's plain
The Spaniards ready stood in arms,
And sought to find, but sought in vain,
The cause of all their wild alarms.

Their scouts were scattered far and near,
They searched each rambla and ravine ;
Yet did no open foe appear,
Nor secret ambush was there seen.
Their corredors pricked o'er the plain,
The vega round for miles they skirred ;
But they returned to camp again——
Without the city nothing stirred.
Their course some by the river bent,
And half-way down to Loxa went——
Resolved the alarming cause to know ;
But failed to hear of any foe :
Some sought above La Mala's height——
No Moorish bands there met their sight ;
Some rode as far as Pinos' bridge,
And by Elvira's rocky ridge ;
But all was peaceful there and still,
Save the wild brook on the hill,
And the echoes which awoke
When their steeds the silence broke :
Yet every soldier felt a thrill,
A dread of some impending ill.

XI.

The fires, that lighted all the field,
Glimmered on shining casque and shield,
And showed each silken banner's fold,
And burnished helm enchased with gold.

In ordered ranks, with armour braced,
They stood as if for battle placed ;
Their weapons ready in their hand,
And waiting but the dread command,—
Glorious yet terrible to see
In all their glittering panoply.
Mounted on horse or ranked on foot,
They stood there motionless and mute,
Watching the warning fires that shone,
And told of danger yet unknown.
They saw with terror and surprise
The strange commotion in the skies ;
A sound like distant thunder brake,
They felt the ground beneath them quake ;
And there was something in the air—
A stifling weight they could not bear,
Like what oppressed the Assyrian host
That awful night on Judah's coast.
Their bravest felt a thrill of fear,
And sense of some dread danger near ;
And all the night they stood in arms,
Filled with a thousand vague alarms ;
Until the morn broke clear and fair
O'er the mountains of the Sun and Air ;
And the bright orb was seen once more
Shining in heaven as before.

Chap. II. Granada. 1571. XII.

That day from Cordova came word,
Confused, of what had there occurred,

Which no one understood aright——
Each told a version of his own ;
And, when at last the truth was known,
All talked about that wondrous flight ;
Some saw the Moor, and some the knight,
And some had seen two men in fight ;
And, though to tell were nothing loath,
Knew not if one was killed or both.
Some said they fought not, but were lost
As a deep mountain stream they crossed ;
Others affirmed that in despair
The Moslem leaped his horse in air,
Where a deep chasm broke the path,
To scape his fierce pursuer's wrath ;
And that the knight, in headlong course,
Unable to restrain his horse,
While pressing close upon his foe,
Fell also in the gulf below.
Some, howe'er, there be who say
They were seen at break of day
Near Penillo, in their flight,—
Two shadowy forms that mocked the sight.
For, they say, the Evil One
Helped the Moor his fate to shun ;
And Our Lady, when he prayed,
To the knight gave equal aid :
Thus, no more mere flesh and blood,
Man and horse as spirits rode ;
And the Moslem still doth fly
From the vengeful Christian nigh.

XIII.

'Tis said he pressed him hard and sore
As the plain they traversed o'er,
Till, at last, he had to seek
Refuge on the mountain peak.
From Alhama's rocky height—
Lofty as an aerie's site,
On a giddy precipice,
Overlooking an abyss,
In whose dreadful depths you scan
The foaming torrent of Marchan—
They were noticed in their flight,
Speeding for the southern side,
Where the Velez pours its tide.
From Malaga the two were seen,
The Christian still pursuing keen ;
And, as they passed the castle gate
Where Julian's daughter met her fate,
The guard upon the lofty wall
Heard the Moor derisive call,
In loud, insulting tone, the name
Of that unhappy maid whose shame
Is coupled with the woes of Spain.

XIV.

By Monardo now he flies,
Where the Red Sierras rise ;

Again the mocking Moslem jeers,
And the maddened Christian hears
A shout, like demon-laugh from far—
“El Feri de ben Estepar !”
By Ronda next, as legends say,
The spirit horsemen took their way ;
Dashing amid its broken rocks
Like the wild goat that danger mocks.
'Tis said they leaped the Guadalvin,
And that their hoof-prints long were seen
On the chasm's dreadful brink,
Where the dark gulf doth deepest sink,
And the hidden stream doth flow
A hundred fathoms far below.
Leaving Zahara on the right,
The Moor to Arcos takes his flight ;
And, still ahead, doth swiftly ride
Along the Guadalete's side
To the Campiña of Xerez*,—
That field where Spain found shame and death.
The air was filled with battle's sound,
Two armies fought upon the ground ;
A swarthy chief, with glowing eye,
His flashing scimitar waved high ;
And his fierce, turbaned followers led
Against a Christian host which fled ;
And soon the whole of that vast plain
Was strewed and covered with their slain.

* Hā-reth,

The Moor triumphant waved his hand,
Again the Christian drew his brand,
And one more phrensied effort made
To reach him with the avenging blade.
The Moor sped on, and followed hard,
From all rest and ease debarred,
Distant hills and plains he sought ;
And, wherever fight was fought
Which on Spain hath evil brought—
Since then, or in the days before,
From Cadiz to Cantabrian shore—
He would point, and mock his foe
With the visioned scene of woe.

XV.

And still they hold their ceaseless flight
Amid the haunted hills of Spain—
Invisible to mortal sight,
And free from mortal wants and pain.
Ne'er pausing, on their course they sweep
Over despoblados wild ;
Through barrancos dark and deep,
Where broken rocks like walls are piled ;
Over dehesas lone and wide,
And where the rugged ramblas stray,
And up the steep Sierra's side,
They still pursue their reckless way.

Swift as the cloud's dark shadow flies
Across the sun-lit plain below :
So, though unseen by mortal eyes,
The spirit horsemen come and go.
But the muleteer hath heard
Their hoofs amid the silent hills,
When sultry noon hath left unstirred
The drooping leaves, and dried the rills.
And when the goat on giddy height
Stands gazing forth with fixed eye,
Although invisible to sight,
The goat-herd knows that they are nigh ;
And when beside the gurgling stream,
His noontide rest the traveller takes,
Perchance the raven's dismal scream
His light but grateful slumber breaks,
He looks around, but all is still
Amid the lonely, lifeless waste—
Only a stone rolls down the hill,
No mortal hand nor foot displaced.
And when the wintry tempests howl,
And danger fills the midnight air,
And loudly shrieks the boding owl,
And the lone hermit kneels in prayer,
More fiercely on their wild career,
Pursuer and pursued sweep past ;
And, sometimes, you can plainly hear
Their voices on the stormy blast.

XVI.

Thus ever onward, night and day,
O'er hill and mountain, plain and wold,
They shall pursue their reckless way
Till ages o'er the earth have rolled,—
Till on Gibraltar's rocky height,
The hated Moslem's earliest hold,
The Christian seize the Moorish knight,
And Spain be what she was of old.
But the Moorish legends say
'Twas Abdallah's sins alone,
And his people's, barred the way
Until Allah's wrath was shown,
And Granada overthrown ;
And their unconquerable chief
Hath still the talisman, 'tis said,
Shall fill the Christian world with grief,
As Spain was filled when Roderic fled,
And on the Guadalete's plain,
The flower of all her land lay slain ;
And that from Taric's famous hill,
He shall descend St. Michael's cave ;
And, plunging down that gulf of ill,
Ride far beneath the ocean wave ;
And re-appear on Afric's sands,
And lead them on to over-run,
Once more, the hated Christian lands
That lie beneath the setting sun,
And win them as proud Spain was won.

SIR HUBERT.

PART FIRST.

IN the days of old, when Richard the Lion-
hearted reigned——
When the Saxon cursed the Norman, and the
Norman him disdained,
Lived the proud Sir Hubert Tracy, sprung from
a knight whose name
Shone bright among the chivalry that with the
Conqueror came.

Sir Hubert in his youth had found within the
lists few peers ;
He still was strong and active, though well ad-
vanced in years ;
Firm was his seat in saddle, and vigorous his arm ;
Nor had he ever met a foe that 'scaped it with-
out harm.

His back unbent, his sinewy limbs unshrunk as
yet by time,
He stood erect in manly strength as men stand
in their prime ;
The ruddiness of youth still left upon his cheek
a trace,
And light the furrows years had worn upon his
noble face.

Though time and toils of war had blanched
somewhat his once dark hair,
His eye undimmed still met your own with an
eagle's searching stare ;
But that his gait and heavy step showed youth
had passed away,
You would have thought him one whose locks
were prematurely grey.

The soul of honour, he had borne through life a
spotless fame,
Proud of his ancient lineage and the glories of
their name ;
No friend to friend was firmer, no foe more dread
to foe ;
For innocence, in deadly strife he had struck
many a blow.

But his temper was implacable, and fiery was his
blood,
And few cared to approach him when he was in
angry mood ;

He hated where he quarrelled ; and his was a
lasting hate
Misfortune could not soften, nor time itself abate.

A friend and former comrade, whom he once
loved as his life,
Roused all these bitter feelings when he wed a
Saxon wife :

“ What ! ” cried the proud Sir Hubert, “ do the
boors not multiply ?
That Norman blood must mix with theirs, lest
the vile race should die.”

These words had led to combat ; for Devereux
was as brave,
And as high-spirited a knight as e'er laid hand
on glaive ;
But the king required his presence in the war
abroad, in France,
Where, in the thick of combat, he was wounded
by a lance.

Made captive in the struggle, long time he there
remained
A prisoner, and died ere he his liberty regained ;
And Sir Hubert felt no pity, but said, in tones of
scorn,
Something about a Saxon whelp when Devereux's son was born.

Some six and twenty years had passed since first
the feud arose
Which made the proud Sir Hubert and the hap-
less Devereux foes ;
And the child had grown a youth, and the youth
become a man,
Skilled in all knightly feats of arms, and known
in battle's van.

Little wot Sir Hubert of him, but the selfsame
hate and ire
He ever bore towards him he had borne towards
his sire ;
Yet strange as it may seem, they had never met
in wrath,
And seldom, very seldom, had crossed each
other's path.

Sir Hubert, long ago, had wed the Lady Margery,
The gentlest of proud Neville's high and stainless
pedigree ;
He then was forty, though in look scarce thirty
years he bore,
And Margery's birthdays, gossips said, would
just sum up a score.

He loved her well and fondly, and she his love
returned ;
Even now, when twenty years had passed, the
cherished flame still burned ;

And Margery looked blooming and beautiful and
fair,

Her husband's presence was her joy, his happiness
her care.

Yet she had borne her share of grief, when her
two brothers fell,

Fighting like brave knights for the cross, as
ancient records tell ;

And scarce a month had passed away in wed-
lock's golden band,

When her beloved father died by an assassin's
hand.

This was a fierce and ruthless knight known as
Le Matador ;

In single combat he had slain, 'twas said, well-
nigh a score :

Struck by fair Margery's beauty, who his suit at
once repressed,

And despite her sire's refusal, he nursed hope in
his breast.

He was, however, absent, when from the Holy
War

Sir Hubert came to England, and some word to
Margery bore ;

And Sir Hubert was her brothers' friend, and
with them when they died ;

What need to say he won her love—that she
became his bride ?

Enraged and eager for a fray, *Le Matador* came
back,
His burning thirst for vengeance in Sir Hubert's
blood to slake ;
But chanced to meet the aged knight, who had his
offers spurned ;
Stung at the thought, his anger to very madness
turned.

Fierce imprecations followed, then a foul and fatal
blow,
And the murderer saw his victim fall—beheld
his life-blood flow :
He had done ruthless deeds before, but in the
light of day
Not such as this—he turned his horse and
swiftly rode away.

Poor Margery wept in silence, and never spoke
a word ;
But Sir Hubert's face was terrible when he the
tidings heard :
Month after month, in many lands, the murderer
he sought ;
And had they met, the world's ne'er seen such
fight as they'd have fought.

For this foul crime, *Le Matador* an outlaw was
declared ;
And ne'er again in England to show himself he
dared ;

And though Sir Hubert sought him from the
first day he fled,
Nothing was seen or heard of him, and all men
thought him dead.

'Twas long since these things had occurred, and,
although not forgot,
He to his wife, or she to him, concerning them
spoke not ;
And thus 'twas from the first, because he knew
it gave her pain ;
And she feared to behold the rage he never
could restrain.

Besides, Time, whose blest hand strews flowers
upon the battle-field,
Had sent one whose sweet influence their deepest
heart-wounds healed ;
And she, their only child, who bore her mother's
gracious air,
Was held most beauteous in a land where beauty
is not rare.

Just at the time my tale begins, of which I now
would speak,
The bloom of nineteen summers was seen upon
her cheek ;
And she had been at many a joust and scene of
pageantry,
And many a brave and gallant knight to her had
bent the knee ;

Among the rest Le Chatelain, in whom were
 found combined
All manly beauty, skill in arms, and nobleness
 of mind ;
Yet with a gracious manner, as firm as it was
 mild,
All she repressed, and never once upon Le
 Chatelain smiled.

'Twas strange that one so formed for love such
 disregard should show
For all that wins a woman's heart and sets her
 cheek a-glow ;
'Twas strange, indeed, at such an age, for never
 yet was known
A beauteous maiden of nineteen who bore a
 heart of stone.

Doubtless, this would have been observed, but
 for the gentle art,
And sweet retiring modesty, with which she
 veiled her heart ;
For she had, as I've already said, her mother's
 gracious air ;
But her father's firmness filled her breast, though
 all seemed mildness there.

Of those who sought to win her love, none higher
 honours bore
Than Sir Reginald le Chatelain, and none de-
 served them more :

Sir Hubert loved him as a friend, nay, almost as
a son ;

And never doubted that by him Maud's heart
had long been won.

'Twas thus, belike, Sir Hubert thought, as seeing
Maud one day

Approach him, with embarrassed air, as some-
thing she would say ;

Right well he knew, or thought he knew, of what
she wished to speak,

And smiled to mark the colour come and go
upon her cheek.

For he had been from home to see some knightly
exercise,

By which the youthful chivalry sought grace in
beauty's eyes ;

'Twas late last night when he returned, and went
at once to rest ;

And now, he thought, Maud wished to ask who
surest rode and best.

For was not brave Le Chatelain there ? and
wished she not to know

If other knight in tilting bout could equal con-
duct show ?

He looked upon the blushing maid with all a
father's love,

And thought, by speaking first, he would her
bashfulness remove.

"Come hither, Maud, my daughter," Sir Hubert kindly said ;

"Know'st thou that I've been thinking to have thee shortly wed ?

Nay, darling, be not startled, but resume thy smile again :

I've fixed on one thou wilt approve—the brave Le Chatelain."

A sudden chill shot through Maud's heart, and pallid grew her cheek ;

She looked hard at her father, but she had no strength to speak.

Sir Hubert smiled when he observed her colour quickly change,

And thought her startled by his speech, so sudden and so strange.

He drew her to his bosom, and fondly kissed her brow,

And said, "Thou lov'st Sir Reginald, my darling, dost not thou ?"

"I like him as a courteous knight, and as a friend," she said,

"And that is all—I love him not, and never will him wed."

Sir Hubert, startled in his turn, looked at her in amaze,

But soon the fiery temper within was all a-blaze ;

His servants crouched before him, his wife ne'er
crossed his mood,
And till now, his child, his heart's delight, his
will had ne'er withstood.

"By our Lady! but thou speak'st," he said in
taunting tone,
"Like one that has a will and a lover of her
own ;
Tell me, good maid, thy lover's name, and, if
Le Chatelain's peer,
Then let him win thee in the lists who bears the
stoutest spear."

For the first time in her father's sight, Maud,
trembling, hung her head,
But he held her tightly by the hand as from him
she'd have fled ;
She felt him looking at her with a fixed and
threatening eye,
And she heard his voice in anger demand her to
reply.

She trembled yet more violently, her colour went
and came ;
At last, she raised her eyes to his, and uttered
Devereux's name ;
"And, father, let me tell you"—she would
have spoken more,
But her voice was as a drowning babe's amid the
tempest's roar.

Quick as the dreadful thunder-crash, that stuns
the startled ear,
Follows the lightning's blinding glare when the
fierce storm is near :
So burst Sir Hubert's anger on Maud's devoted
head—
He thrust her off with curses, scarce knowing
what he said.

The Lady Margery, in alarm, was hastening to
the hall,
Just as she heard Sir Hubert's voice loudly upon
her call ;
She entered : " Dame, take thou this minx, and
keep her under key,
Till hither I return and bring Sir Reginald with
me."

Fondly she clasped the weeping Maud, who on
her bosom fell ;
She would have spoken, but she knew her hus-
band's mood too well.
Spurred by his fiery temper, no moment would
he wait,
But hastened to the castle-yard, and soon rode
through the gate.

PART SECOND.

ON the fourth day Sir Hubert returned, but all
alone ;
For Sir Reginald was absent, and his coming
back unknown ;
Chafing with disappointment, he had tarried but
a night
To rest his horse, and left again at the next
morning's light.

With stern and settled purpose, on his homeward
way he sped ;
His lowering brow and angry eye filled those he
met with dread ;
And when the hurrying menials his sweating
charger took,
Although he never spoke a word, they trembled
at his look.

Even Margery, who could soothe him when no
other durst come near,
Now ventured scarce to ope her lips, or spoke as
if in fear :

Whate'er to others, he to her had ever gentle
been ;

But in so stern a mood as this her lord she'd
never seen.

He supped in silence and alone, yet little did he
care

For the deep flow of ruddy wine, or for the goodly
fare :

The supper done, of all his men the trustiest and
best

He called to him, and orders gave, e'er he retired
to rest.

Soon as the coming morn had tinged the eastern
sky with grey,

Sir Hubert and his man rode forth, both armed
as for a fray ;

The Lady Margery watched them, as they sped
by hill and dale,

And when she marked the way they went her
cheek grew deathly pale.

Her bosom heaved convulsively, her tears began
to flow ;

She spent the day in weeping, in fearfulness and
woe.

“ But what,” you ask, fair lady, “ could thus her feelings stir ?”

Ah! had *you* been Dame Margery, you would have wept like her.

Meanwhile, Sir Hubert, goaded by the passion in his breast,

Urged his horse onward, while his man closely behind him pressed ;

They halted not upon the road, save when compelled to wait

A needful hour, about noontide, their steeds to breathe and bait.

The sun was setting at the close of a bright autumn day,

When they drew near a hostelry that stood beside the way ;

Here, from their wearied horses, master and man alight,

And, after due refreshment, each his couch sought for the night.

Next morning, when their steeds were groomed and hunger's wants supplied,

They left, but took a road that turned from yesterday's aside ;

Nor far they journeyed, till appeared a castle in full view——

An oath burst from Sir Hubert with the name of Devereux.

It was a large and massive pile, such as in days
of old

The Norman nobles used to build—both dwell-
ing and stronghold.

Some that remain show what this was—a strong,
square central keep,

With flanking towers, and battlements, and moat
both wide and deep :

There were the great arched gate-way, and port-
cullis in its slide,

Whose massive bars of iron all fierce assault
defied ;

And drawbridge, barbican, and wall, and the
watch-tower on high,

From which the distant foe's approach the watch-
man might descry.

But ne'er had foe come hither yet with so intense
a hate,

As the fierce old knight, Sir Hubert, who now
drew near the gate ;

No warder challenged his approach, nor was a
trumpet blown,

Nor sound nor movement served to show his
presence there was known.

He looked, but saw at drawbridge, on barbican,
or wall,

No living soul. He shouted loud, when, answer-
ing to his call,

A page appeared : he was a youth, most beautiful and fair,
With features of the finest mould, and soft, bright golden hair.

A cap of sable velvet, a plume of snowy white,
Clasped by a gem that sparkled like a star in winter night ;
A doublet—black, with crimson slashed, and trimmed with rich gold lace,
Set off a form which was adorned with every youthful grace.

The open breast, a purpled shirt of purest white displayed ;
The crimson hose that clothed his limbs their symmetry betrayed :
Such was the youth, and such his garb, who, at Sir Hubert's call,
Came to the battlement that rose o'er the portcullis' wall.

The page responsive challenged—and his voice was sweet and clear :
“What, ho ! Sir Knight, make known thy name, and what thy business here.”
“I am Sir Hubert Tracy, boy, thy master would I see ;
And when we meet, as meet we must, 'tis death to him or me.”

"Sir Hubert Tracy, I have heard thee spoken of
as one

By whom dishonourable act has never yet been
done——

'Tis such to force a combat without just cause
for strife :

I ask thee now to tell me why thou seek'st my
master's life."

"It is enough—his father, long ago, provoked my
hate,

And towards himself this feeling from his very
birth doth date ;

Besides, he now hath stolen my daughter's heart
away,

Who, but for him, the knight I chose, had wed
without gainsay."

"Does not thy heart reproach thee for this hatred
fixed and strong ?

Thou knowest that neither sire nor son has ever
done thee wrong :

What harm should he thy daughter love, or she
his love return ?

Fie, fie ! Sir Hubert, such a cause of quarrel thou
shouldst spurn."

"Gramercy, but thou hast a tongue ! and, when
no more a boy,

If with like skill thou wield thy sword, thy foe
shall have employ ;

But bid thy master hasten forth—tell him that I
am here ;

And let him choose what ground he will, his
death or mine is near.”

“Now Heaven forbid, Sir Hubert, it should be
as thou dost say !

For wife or daughter, one or both, were heart-
crushed through the fray :

I pray thee, pause, while yet 'tis time, in this thy
fierce intent ;

Nor seek to do that which, if done, thou ever
wouldst repent.

“I'll tell my master, word for word, what thou
to me hast said ;

Though much I doubt his hand he'll lift against
thy honoured head :

Know this, at least, howe'er provoked, he will
not fight to-day—

Think on thy wife—thy daughter's life, and let
thy reason sway.”

“Enough, enough, thou prating boy ! no war of
words I wage ;

Nor wife nor daughter shall prevent the fight for
which I rage :

Tell thy master, here, to-morrow, at this hour I
shall be found ;

There is my gage.” Sir Hubert flung his gaunt-
let on the ground.

Next day, attended by his man, in like defiant mood,

The old knight, at the self-same hour before the castle stood :

No one was there, nor at the gate, nor on the castle wall ;

Nor came the page until he heard Sir Hubert loudly call.

“ This is the hour : what means it thy master is not here ?

Go, bid him now come forth at once, if hides he not from fear.”

“ Fear of a foe in open fight my master ne’er hath known ;

And if he meets thee not to day ’tis for Maud’s love alone.”

“ Prates he of this to thee, as cause why he avoids my sight ?

’Tis fear, not love,—the latter nerves the soldier’s arm in fight.

My curse upon the coward ! who thus keeps within his gate,

And makes a woman’s love the plea to shield him from his fate.”

Whilst thus the wroth but baffled knight to his scornful tongue gave rein,

If you had marked the page’s face, ’twas flushed and flushed again ;

But whether pain, or anger, or shame was there
displayed,
I cannot say, but to the knight reply he quickly
made :

“Sir knight, the knowledge of his love for Maud
I’ve long possessed—
No shame attends just confidence like his ; and,
for the rest—
In many a well-contested field his courage has
been tried :
He ne’er hath deadly conflict sought, nor turned
from it aside.

“My master much regards me, and, for his
honour, I
Would freely drain my heart’s best blood, ere
stain on it should lie.”
Sir Hubert looked—the page’s eye like a young
soldier’s shone ;
And there was something in his voice that
thrilled him with its tone.

“Beshrew me, boy ! but I would give half that
I can control
If thy recreant master but possessed thy bravery
of soul :
I come again to-morrow, and, if the coward fail
To meet me then, I’ll smite him in public till he
quail.”

A third time fierce Sir Hubert to Devereux's
castle came—

Keen to provoke the fight for which his breast
was all aflame ;

But no one saw, till, as before, he shouted, when
the page

Came, and in silence pointed to the yet unlifted
gage.

Shaking with baffled rage, he raised the gauntlet
on his lance ;

Avoided, seeking, it remained to meet his foe by
chance :

“ Since thus, when mixed, the Saxon clay doth
Norman spirit clog,

I'll smite him like a village churl, ay, like a very
dog !”

“ Sir Hubert, let not thy fierce wrath to such rash
wildness run ;

For Maud hath wed Sir Walter, and now he is
thy son :

Return, I pray thee, to thy dame, and when thou
hear'st her tale,

Perchance, within thy breast, at last, mild reason
may prevail.

“ Oh ! think, Sir Hubert, what had been thy
daughter's wretched fate,

If severed from the one she loved by thy un-
reasoning hate :

Oh! think on Lady Margery and thy foe,
Le Matador——"

Sir Hubert, at that name accursed, oaths deep
and dreadful swore ;

He gave his ready steed the rein, fiercely his
flanks he spurred,
And left, before the startled page could speak
another word.

On, on, he rode through all the night, nor rest
would take nor food,

Until within Dame Margery's bower all travel-
stained he stood.

PART THIRD.

WHEN first Sir Hubert entered, his wife was
sunk in grief ;

But one glance at face and armour to her feelings
brought relief.

He sternly spoke: " Dame Margery, tell me at
once, I pray,

Is thy daughter in thy keeping still, or how got
she away ?"

" She is not here," the dame replied, " but it were
long to tell

What caused me let her go from hence, or how
the thing befell ;

And now, my good lord Hubert, if thou hast
love for me,

Hear calmly all I have to say, and hear it
silently."

She paused, as waiting his reply, her cheek grew
deathly pale ;

He bowed, and stood in attitude to listen to her
tale :

She fixed her eyes upon him—they were dark-
blue, tinged with grey,—

Tender, yet steadfast—still his soul their gentle
looks could sway.

Calm was her manner, and her voice was earnest,
sweet, and clear—

Just such a voice as man delights from woman's
lips to hear ;

But, sometimes, through her calmness deep agi-
tation broke ;

And sometimes her sweet, earnest voice would
tremble as she spoke :

“Nine days ago, Sir Hubert,—’twas the day
before the night

Thou camest from the tilting bout—the morn
was fair and bright ;

Attended by two trusty men, who followed,
Maud and I

Rode forth to breathe the pleasant air, and our
brave hawks to fly.

“Nature was joyous, and we rode along in blithe-
some mood ;

Maud carolled like the happy bird that haunts
the summer wood :

Her cheek was flushed with exercise, and often,
far from me,
Hither and thither would she ride, in sportive
child-like glee.

“ At length we marked a heron, like a speck in
heaven’s blue ;
Maud’s hawk, unhooded, westward soared, for
thus the quarry flew :
Off rode she, like a spirit maid upon a flying
steed ;
The men and I rode after ; but I followed with
less speed.

“ Loitering, I looked around me—all was so fair
and bright ;
And, ere I wist, the swelling ground had hid the
three from sight :
I sought them here and there in vain, and, when
an hour had passed,
I noticed that the sky had grown threatening
and overcast.

“ I was returning slowly by the edge of a dark
wood,
When three horsemen, armed all *cap-à-pie*,
stopped me with gestures rude ;
One, the most powerful of the three, appeared
to be a knight,
The other seemed a foreigner, the third a stal-
wart wight.

“The first advanced towards me, and bowing
mockingly,
Said, ‘Lady-fair, that face of thine seems not
quite strange to me.’

I knew him by his shoulders broad, his voice, the
crest he bore—

It was my father’s murderer, it was *Le Ma-
tador!*”

Sir Hubert started, and he laid his hand upon
his sword;

His eye blazed, and his brow was knit; yet spake
he not a word.

She paused a moment, overcome, and then re-
sumed her tale:

“He saw I knew him, and he said, ‘Thy memory
does not fail.

“‘Sweet Margery I commend thee for the little
loss of charms

Thou showest after twenty years in old Sir
Hubert’s arms;

Ho! my good friends, see you this dame? She
once did scorn my love,

And now, when twice ten years are passed, she
shall my leman prove.’

“At the first sight of the ruffians, I was stricken
powerless, dumb;

I scarce knew what was passing, nor guessed
what was to come;

But now I loudly shrieked for help, in agony
looked round,
And saw a fourth armed horseman on a gently
rising ground.

“He was observing all that passed, and, when
he heard my cry,
Forward he rode with dauntless air, and his
voice was stern and high :
‘Masters, what would ye with the dame ? I bid
you let her go,
Or, by the God of innocence, I’ll lay her wronger
low !’

“‘Have at thee, then, intruder,’ cried *Le Matador*
in scorn ;
‘This the most luckless day shall be thou’st
known since thou wast born ;
Nay, friends, permit me first,’ he said, as forward
they’d have rode,
‘The zest of this mad combat rightly to me is
owed.’

“Thus in derision speaking, *Le Matador* with-
drew,
To give his horse space for the tilt, and left the
other two ;
One seized my palfrey’s bridle : he a stout axe
only bore ;
But the foreigner, keen for the fray, advanced a
pace before.

“ Trembling, I watched their movements with
anxiety and pain,
And I thought upon the number *Le Matador*
had slain ;
Armed at all points, and seated on a large and
strong-limbed horse,
He rode the full embodiment of deadly, brutal
force.

“ The stranger bore himself as one not easy to
overthrow,
More active in his movements, but less powerful
than his foe ;
He seemed, as far as I could judge, of tall and
sinewy frame,
But unequal both in size and strength to him
'gainst whom he came.

“ His horse, too, was less large of limb, and less
in height he stood ;
But he was a noble charger, deep-chested, full of
blood ;
His rider had him at command, and well I
marked the skill
With which he foiled the other in attempt to
gain the hill.

“ There, as the brave steed turned about, he
snorted with delight,
As if he loved the clash, of arms and gloried in
the fight ;

The knight a moment looked to heaven—perhaps
he breathed a prayer
To Mary Mother, or, perhaps, thought on his
lady-fair.

‘ Then settling in his saddle, with bent knee and
forward head,
Like heaven’s own fiery bolt of wrath against his
foe he sped ;
And, oh ! how gallantly he rode is pictured in
my mind !
His glittering lance thrust out before, his stream-
ing plume behind.

“ He rode like him whom old tales call the chief
of warlike gods :
Like him he rode right onward, as reckless of all
odds.

Le Matador was full a-tilt, the foreigner at hand,
And the man who held my palfrey his own horse
scarce made stand.

“ I thought not of myself just then, but of him
who in that strife

For me thus vainly was about to throw away his
life ;

I’d seen men fight in lists before, but, though
concerned in part,

I had never for the issue felt such agony of
heart.

"No ; not, Sir Hubert, when thou fought'st the
dreaded Gascon knight,
From whom, 'twas said, no man with life had
ever scaped in fight.

I knew that thou wast brave and strong, and full
as deft as he,

And then, it was but man to man, while here
'twas one to three.

"All this was but a moment's work, though long
to thee the tale,

And now they are about to close—— O Heaven,
my vision veil !

Blest Queen of Mercy, though I die, do thou
protect his head !

But my prayer to Mary Mother was rather
thought than said.

"They close : a crash, and it is done—the ground
is red with gore,

But my prayer is heard and answered—'tis from
Le Matador.

Ave Maria Sancta ! thou wast his shield that
day,

Or the good knight had not escaped scathless
from such a fray.

"Oh, now I mind ! my champion, when the other
near him drew,

Full on his shield received his lance, the shaft in
splinters flew ;

His own, by Heaven directed, did its deadly office
 well,
And the false knight, the outlaw, the base as-
 sassin fell.

“ But no time had the victor to extricate his
 lance,
Till the wily foreign horseman sought remede
 for the mischance ;
His steed was straining on the start, his lance
 was placed in rest,
Ere to the ground the spouting gore flowed from
 his leader’s breast.

“ Now at my brave defender he rode with might
 and main,
And the man-at-arms, who guarded me, let go
 my bridle-rein.
The knight failed not to mark this, though his
 enemy was nigh,
And he shouted, ‘ For the love of Heaven, oh,’
 fly, my lady, fly !

But I could not stir, Sir Hubert, from that scene
 of deadly strife,
While my champion was in jeopardy, and fighting
 for his life ;
And had they born him down, they should have
 pierced me through and through,
Ere from his heart the vital flood ‘ the blade of
 mercy ’ drew.

“ His horse he quickly leaped aside when came
the other nigh,

What followed then, Sir Hubert, well I marked
with anxious eye ;

Thrown thus at fault, the foreigner a second
passage ran,

But the knight now seized his battle-axe, and
boldly faced his man.

“ Calmly he watched the coming of his keen and
crafty foe,

But the third, whose horse had stumbled, hasted
too to strike a blow.

No help was near,—alas, alas ! in vain I tried to
pray,

But I would that I had been a man to join with
him that day.

“ The lance was almost at his breast : its point he
dashed aside

With his good axe, which, sweeping round as a
lightning swirl might glide,

Came full upon the centre of the foreign horse-
man’s head :

The horse sped on, but by the foot he dragged
his rider dead.

“ The third, a strong and sturdy wight, was now
left quite alone ;

But the knight was much exhausted, and his
good steed also blown.

They paused, and at each other looked, their axes
 lifted high,
Before they made the deadly close in which the
 one must die.

“ But the holy Virgin Mother shielded my knight
 from harm,
And the might of the great Roland seemed seated
 in his arm ;
Down came his trenchant weapon through hel-
 met, skull, and brain,
And the ruffian, reeling, fell to earth, and never
 moved again.

“ Then, nor till then, Sir Hubert, my tears began
 to flow,
That Heaven to me and to my knight such grace
 was pleased to show ;
And when he rode towards me, I almost felt
 that I
Could kneel to him—perhaps ’twas wrong—as I
 kneel to God on high.

“ His helmet having now removed, his head was
 wholly bare,
As if to cool his heated brow in the refreshing
 air ;
I knew him by his sunny locks, and by his eyes
 of blue,—
I knew him for the Saxon knight, Sir Walter
 Devereux.”

Sir Hubert's face flushed quickly as the vault of
heaven with flame ;

No word he uttered, but he hung his head for
very shame.

She still continued speaking, but he his eyes no
more

Durst raise to hers, but kept them fixed intently
on the floor.

"When he came up to me, he bowed in salu-
tation low,—

More graceful courtesy no knight in Christendom
could show,—

And said, 'My lady, art not thou Sir Hubert
Tracy's dame ?'

I tried to speak, but, 'Thanks, oh, thanks !' were
all the words that came.

"I thought upon thy quarrel with his father,
once thy friend,—

Of the hatred, which the grave, alas ! could not
bring to an end ;

But, on the slightest pretext, would have made
thee seek the life

Of him who just had saved from dishonour foul
thy wife.

"I know not if my countenance these thoughts
to him betrayed ;

But, when I said, 'Sir Walter, how canst thou be
repaid ?'

He answered with a joyful voice and a bright
sunny smile,

'I'll see thee safely homeward, and I'll tell thee
this the while.'

"'Twas then, Sir Hubert, on the way, I, for the
first time, learned

How long and well Maud he had loved, how she
his love returned ;

How first they met by accident, and afterwards
by stealth ;

How oft a stolen glance increased their hearts'
store of love's wealth.

"How, year by year, they cherished hope that
time would yet abate

Thy bitterness towards him, or some happy
chance await ;

How he had come that morn in hope his lady-
love to see,

And, as Heaven willed it, just in time to lend his
aid to me.

"Sir Walter then besought me that I would con-
firm his love ;

And he'd be paid a hundred-fold, wouldst thou
his suit approve :

There is no need, Sir Hubert, to say I freely
gave

My promise to the knight who'd done so much
myself to save.

"The castle now was not far off, and, bowing, he
withdrew ;

But till I reached the very gate, he kept me well
in view :

Maud and the men not long were back ; when
they my absence learned—

They thought me home—they would have sought,
but safe I then returned.

"I told Maud all that had occurred, and what
Sir Walter said ;

She kissed me, wept for joy, and in my bosom
hid her head ;

Her transports over, she desired to thee the tale
to tell ;

She would have done so, but what happed, Sir
Hubert, thou know'st well.

"Thou wouldst not for a moment wait, but set
off in a heat ;

I saw at once that, come what might, thy plan I
must defeat :

Besides,—for well I know thy mood,—when thou
wouldst come again,

Thou wouldst not hear a word till Maud had wed
Le Chatelain.

"Had she refused,—and this was sure,—Le
Chatelain had borne part

In what had pained him ; for I know his noble-
ness of heart :

Therefore I sent for Devereux ; we left the house
at night,

Him at the church we met, and they were wed
ere morning light.

“ And now, Sir Hubert, by the love that thou
hast sworn to me ;

By all the honoured laws that grant awards in
chivalry ;

Nay, by the blest atonement that secures in
heaven thy part,

Receive Sir Walter Devereux, and take him to
thy heart.”

Like to an angel's pleading—if they *do* plead—
was her look ;

Sir Hubert like a trembling child or quivering
aspen shook ;

His heart was bursting in his breast, yet strove
he to conceal

The feelings which, despite him, their presence
would reveal.

She'd seen him on the battle-field when the fierce
strife was o'er ;

When the ground beneath his feet was red with
his brave comrades' gore ;

When his dearest friends were weltering in the
sanguinary tide ;

And his brother, stout Sir Godfrey, lay lifeless
by his side.

His cheek indeed was ashy pale, but not a tear
was there ;

For Sir Hubert was a soldier, and such things
must soldiers bear :

But now large drops came streaming a-down his
quivering cheek,

And his voice was deep and husky when he
 essayed to speak.

Sir Hubert looked on Margery with looks of love
and pride,

Just as he looked when, long ago, he claimed her
as his bride ;

He clasped his arms around her, and he kissed
her o'er and o'er,

And Margery blushed as she had blushed just
twenty years before.

“ Dame, it shall be as thou hast said—forgotten
all my hate,

Save that my love for him shall be a hundred-
fold as great.

A trusty messenger I'll send upon my fleetest
steed,

To bid Sir Walter and his bride come hither
with all speed.

“ And there shall be high wassail in courtyard
and in hall,

For which the costliest wine shall flow, the fat-
test buck shall fall :

SIR HUBERT.

See that fit preparation thy attendant wenches
make

In kitchen, hall, and chamber, that the guests
due comfort take.

“The villagers shall have their sports upon the
village green ;

And the standards and the trophies in the great
hall shall be seen ;

And minstrels shall sing brave old songs to lords
and ladies gay ;

And joy shall fill the hearts of all, and revelry
hold sway.”

PART FOURTH.

THE guests were all assembled in Sir Hubert's
banquet hall ;
Old banners, borne on many a field, hung from
the scutcheoned wall ;
Rich armour Saracens had worn, wrought by a
curious hand,
And blades of bright Damascus steel, brought
from the Holy Land.

Brave knights, in richest vestments clad, sat
beside ladies fair ;
And Sir Reginald le Chatelain, Sir Hubert's
friend, was there :
And minstrels, placed in honoured seats, where
banners o'er them hung,
Struck their loud harps, and to the throng the
song of Roland sung.

The music ceased ; Sir Hubert rose and thus addressed his guests :

“ My fair and gentle friends, to-day, a duty with me rests——

To make acknowledgment of wrong, and tell you what I owe

To one that I long hated and regarded as a foe.”

He then spoke of Devereux’s father, and the cause of the sad feud ;

And told of Maud’s love for the knight, and how in angry mood

He would have shed the blood of him who had just saved his wife

From foul dishonour at a risk three-fold against his life.

He told them all, as I have told, what Lady Margery said ;

And how, with her assistance, the brave knight and Maud were wed ;

How he regretted now the past, and wished it was undone ;

And how he loved Sir Walter, and received him as his son.

The servants at this moment threw wide an inner door,

And Sir Walter Devereux and his bride advanced upon the floor ;

And all the guests there present rose instant to
their feet ;

And a thousand acclamations Maud and her husband greet.

Their greetings and his joyous looks no language
can express ;

And Maud's deep blushes but increased her
wonted loveliness.

She wore a long, white flowing robe, spangled
and trimmed with gold,

Which fell around her graceful form in many a
floating fold ;

A bodice of embroidered silk covered her snowy
breast,

And a jupe of purple velvet was over all the
rest ;

Her necklace, set with costly gems, a star-like
lustre shed,

And a bridal wreath of roses was twined around
her head.

When they entered all the guests, as I have said,
rose to their feet ;

And here Le Chatelain showed himself both
generous and discreet :

" By all the laws of chivalry, Sir Walter hath
Maud won ;

And thou'st done right, Sir Hubert, to receive
him as thy son.

“Were’t not so, hearing what I’ve heard, myself
had sought him out ;
Nor stopped, till reconciliation with thee I’d
brought about :
And now, in truth, scarce know I which to envy
him the more—
His bride, or the brave conduct that in the fight
he bore.

“Here is my hand, Sir Walter, and, as I am a
true knight,
Thy friends are mine at festival, thy foes are
mine in fight.”
At this the rest gave loud applause, Maud’s face
with pleasure glowed,
And bright eyes their approval on Le Chatelain
bestowed.

And now they all were seated beside the festal
board,
Which unstinted hospitality had with rich viands
stored ;
Fat venison and barbecue and capon there were
served,
And many another dish whose name alone has
been preserved.
And flagons of good Rhenish wine, and fruits
from sunny Spain,
And cups of burnished gold were there, and sil-
ver free from stain.

The good priest joyed to see the fare, and briefly
asked a grace
Upon the food before them, and a blessing on
the place.

They feasted ; and they pledged the bride in the
good Rhenish wine ;

And the minstrels sang sweet songs of love to
measures most divine ;

And all declared to Devereux that they would
be his friends,

And Margery praised, and their good host, who
thus had made amends.

And ladies nigh as fair as Maud, moved by the
music's strain

And by his nobleness of heart, smiled on Le
Chatelain.

Sir Hubert in right joyous mood a cup filled to
the brim,

And questioned Devereux of the page who had
discoursed with him :

"I liked the youth, Sir Walter, although my
blood was up ;

And were he here to share our joy, I'd drain
with him this cup."

To this speech of Sir Hubert's, no reply Sir
Walter made ;

But, turning round, he smiled to Maud, who
blushed and hung her head.

While this was passing in the hall, out in the
open air,

The retainers in the courtyard partook of plainer
fare ;

Deep bumpers from the brimming bowls, time
after time they quaff,

High their carouse and loud their song, and
louder still their laugh.

And how that day they feasted, how oft they
danced and well,

The village youths and maidens long years after
loved to tell :

Such were the days of chivalry—such the brave
times of old,

Ere commerce had corrupted men to spend their
lives for gold.

LOCH LEVEN.

“OH ! lovely is the Leven lake
In summer sheen or autumn ray ;
And lovely when its ripples wake,
Stirred by the gentle breath of May.

“ But Leven hath no charms for me,
While pent within this prison wall ;
The scenes that else 'twere joy to see,
But pain me when in captive thrall.

“ Oh ! lovely is the Leven lake
At golden morn or gloaming grey ;
When birds the early silence break,
Or when they sing their vesper lay.

“ But Leven hath no charms for me,
While pent within this prison wall ;
The scenes that else 'twere joy to see,
But pain me when in captive thrall.”

These words were warbled soft and low,
With plaintive air and touching tone,
As if the heart that bade them flow
Was fearful lest its griefs were known.

A youth stood listening by the tower,
The casement was wide open flung;
And looking forth at sunset hour,
The lovely captive sat and sung.

Upon his ear the music fell,
Soft as the murmur of the rill,
Whose melody floats through the dell
At summer eve when all is still.

With looks that failed not to betray
The sympathy he sought to hide,
He listened to the plaintive lay,
And when the music ceased, he sighed.

She marked him standing by the tower,
And o'er the open casement leant;
But never yet in hall or bower,
At festival or tournament,

In painter's thought or poet's dream,
Was ever lady seen so fair,
As she who in the sunset gleam
Sat at the open casement there.

She looked upon the gazing youth,
 A blush suffused his handsome face—
 The sign that tells with pleasing truth
 When first the heart gives love a place.

She looked upon him with a smile
 That haughty kings had knelt to win ;
 'Twas sad, but still so sweet the while,
 It melted all his soul within.

'Twas but a moment that she turned
 Her eyes upon him as he gazed—
 'Twas but a moment, yet she learned,
 With woman's skill, the thoughts she raised.

Oh ! who can listen to the stream
 Of music as it sweetly flows
 From beauty's lips, nor fondly deem
 For him alone those lips unclose !

Or meet her soul-revealing eye
 Fixed full and fondly on his own,
 Nor feel a thrill of ecstasy
 That words were powerless to make known !

She sings again ; but now her song
 Is bold and artful in its strain :
 He listened, while a wildering throng
 Of daring hopes passed through his brain.

“ Oh ! tell me where in Scottish land
Will injured lady champion see ;
Oh ! tell me whose the noble hand
That dares a captive queen set free.

“ Time was when a whole nation rose
In arms for beauteous Helen’s wrong ;
Ten years they fought with distant foes
For woman’s sake, nor thought it long.

“ And must I pine in prison lone ?
And must I weep o’er deeper woes ?—
Ev’n in the land which is my own
Bear greater wrongs from rebel foes—

“ And never see a banner wave
In my behalf before the gate ;
Nor knight so bold as come to save
And free me from this cruel fate ?

“ Oh ! were I but in sunny France,
The land of love and chivalry !
Her bravest soon would couch the lance,
And die or win my liberty.

“ The haughty knights of Old Castile
Had fought the world arrayed in arms,
Ere half my wrongs their queen could feel,
Or prison walls could hide her charms.

“Though England’s spacious realm resounds
 With rumours of high tyranny,
 The meanest hind within her bounds
 Had died, or kept his sovereign free.

“Once Scotland had a knightly king,
 And knights with dauntless hearts were found,
 When Annie sent the fatal ring,
 To follow him to English ground.

“They died ; but better ’twas to die,
 With glory and with spotless fame,
 Than, breaking honour’s sacred tie,
 Live branded with a recreant name.

“And is there not in Scotland now
 One heart that feels for queenly wrongs ?—
 One hand to guard the aching brow
 To which the queenly crown belongs ?

“The Grecian was a wedded dame,
 They sought her only for her lord ;
 And ’twas alone for knightly fame
 The chiefs of Flodden drew the sword.

“And knightly fame may still be won
 By feats of chivalrous emprise ;
 And royal beauty may not shun
 The love whose deeds move more than sighs.”

Such was the song that filled his ear,
He understood its deep intent ;
Though others listening round might hear,
Yet he alone knew what it meant.

The youth was of a noble race,
The captive was surpassing fair ;
To free her from that irksome place
Was all that boldest knight might dare.

For far from shore the castle stood,
All lonely on an island small,
Encircled by Loch Leven's flood,
And strong and lofty was its wall.

The ponderous gate that closed the port
With massive bolts was locked and barred ;
And watchful as in leaguered fort
Were those who o'er her there kept guard.

But what will manhood not essay
When lovely woman makes request ?
And what shall bar to him the way,
Who carries but a dauntless breast ?

For love can make the little bird
With mimic boldness shield his mate ;
And love can make the bosom stirred
By beauty's power to challenge Fate.

And she was fair and he was young,
And his high heart was all a-flame,
When, in the thrilling song she sung,
She hinted at a lover's name.

And he was of a race renowned
For many a bold and daring deed :
No knight more fit could she have found
In Christendom to serve her need.

Unaided and alone, 'twere vain
To try by force to set her free ;
But none in love or war refrain
From plans that work by secrecy.

He could not pass the guarded gate,
He could not break the massive wall ;
But he could watch and he could wait
A chance to set her free from thrall.

He could not give her wings of flight,
To bear her bird-like far away ;
But in deceptive garb he might
The lovely captive thence convey.

A little thing success commands :
She had escaped in humble guise,
Had not the whiteness of her hands
Betrayed her to their searching eyes.

Now under stricter watch and ward
They kept her with more jealous care ;
And him by banishment debarred
From castled-isle and lady-fair.

But there remained a youthful page,
Of kindred blood and kindred name,
Ready to serve them, and engage
In what has won him deathless fame.

With all the daring of a man
Who wrests a chance from adverse fate,
He boldly ventured on a plan
By which to pass the prison gate.

While waiting humbly on his lord
At supper, as if carelessly,
He dropped a napkin on the board,
And stole, unseen, the castle key.

Loch Leven and his men sat there,
Suspecting not the youth's design,
Who hastened to the captive fair,
And gave the looked-for, silent sign.

A mantle o'er her quickly cast,
She followed him with footstep light ;
He locked the gate when they had passed,
The better to secure their flight.

No accident his purpose marred,
 And fortune on them seemed to smile ;
 The boat that served the castle-guard
 Conveyed them from the dangerous isle.

And page and captive sought the shore,
 Favoured by its convenient aid.
 No fairer freight the wave e'er bore
 Since Helen was to Troy conveyed.

Douglas was watching from the land,
 With anxious heart and eager eye.
 At last, he beckoned with his hand,
 Impatient till they made reply.

He saw her wave a long white veil
 With crimson fringe,—he knew 'twas she ;
 That signal told the joyful tale,—
 Her friends were near, and she was free.

The setting sun shone o'er the scene,
 The young page deftly plied the oar :
 And lovely Mary, Scotland's queen,
 In safety reached Loch Leven's shore.

SOBIESKI.

THE exploits of John Sobieski, the illustrious and chivalresque King of Poland, are among the most heroic and glorious on record, particularly that of the deliverance of Vienna.

In the summer of 1683, Kara Mustapha, the ambitious vizier of the Sultan Mohammed IV., led into Hungary an immense army, which, including camp followers, numbered nearly 400,000 men, and threatened the Austrian Empire with utter destruction. All Germany was filled with alarm and terror. The Duke of Lorraine, a brave and skilful soldier, commanded the imperial army, the total strength of which was about 45,000 men ; but, after providing some necessary garrisons, he had only 30,000 left for field operations. With this small force, he attempted to delay the advance of the invading army, which was moving on Vienna ; but he was

driven back precipitately across the Danube. That same evening the Emperor Leopold fled in terror from the city, which he left almost in a state of revolt. He was lighted on his way by the blazing towns fired by the Tartars, who nearly captured him in his flight to Linz. Count Ernest von Stahremberg, to whom was entrusted the defence of Vienna, entered it on the following day, and, immediately afterwards, about 10,000 troops to garrison it. Encouraged by the presence of the soldiers, and by Stahremberg's assurance that an army would soon come to their aid, the citizens united with him in doing everything to maintain an heroic defence. Old men, women, girls, and even children, caught the enthusiasm, and employed themselves in rendering useful services to the others.

The city was at once closely invested by the Moslems, and, despite the efforts of its defenders, it must inevitably have fallen, had not Sobieski, implored by Leopold, hastened with an army of Poles to its relief. He arrived just at the moment when it was reduced to the last extremity. The united Christian forces, the supreme command of which was assigned to him, amounted to 70,000 men; namely, the Austrians, Saxons, Swabians, Bavarians, and other Germans, to 45,000; and the Poles, two-thirds of whom were cavalry, to 25,000. The Turkish army had been

reduced by garrisons, and by large bodies sent to different parts of the country ; and, besides, had suffered heavy losses during the siege. According to the most reliable estimates, the number at this time present before Vienna could not have exceeded 140,000 men.

The Christian armies crossed the Danube,—the Germans at Krems, and the Poles at Tulln,—and, having united, reached the summit of the Kahlenberg, a lofty ridge about five miles from the city, on the evening of Saturday, and, on the following day, Sunday, the 12th of September, 1683, the great battle was fought. In the morning, at an early hour, divine service was performed at the chapel of the Margrave Leopold, on the summit of the mountain, by the venerable Marco d'Aviano, the preacher of this crusade ; after which, Sobieski addressed his soldiers, and then led them down against the enemy. Very few cannon were used in this battle, which began with a volley of musketry. The Turks were badly posted, and without leaders comparable to those of the Christians ; yet they fought with bravery and courage, as Sobieski himself testifies. The victory was decisive, but the slaughter less than might have been expected. The Turkish loss is said to have amounted to 25,000 men ; that of the Christians has been put as low as 1,000 killed and 3,000 wounded ; but it was probably

one-half greater. The Germans fought bravely ; but it was the Poles who took the most important part in the battle, whose irresistible charges, under the immediate command of Sobieski, put the Turks to flight, and it was they who captured their camp.

I.

“ THE Turks are at Vienna !” so ran the fearful tale ;

And those who spoke had trembling lips, and those who heard turned pale.

“ The Turks are at Vienna ! unaided, it must fall : Three hundred cannon thunder against its fated wall.

Day by day, its strong defences before their fire go down ;

The army is defeated, and the Kaiser’s fled the town !”

II.

There was death along the Danube,—there was terror on the Rhine ;

There were blazing towns and slaughter from Belgrade to Lossenstein ;

There were tens of thousands fleeing, who knew not where to go,—

At every turn they were pursued and slaughtered by the foe.

In vain the wretched peasants in the forests hid
away :

The cruel hunters, even there, with bloodhounds
sought their prey.

III.

The harvest fields were trampled down, the
ground was red with gore ;

And the dead reapers' bodies lay like sheaves on
the threshing-floor.

There were blackened ruins all around, where
happy homes had stood,

And serf and noble, herd and hind, lay weltering
in their blood ;

And women wept o'er lifeless forms, for which
there were no graves ;

And gentle maids were ravished, and fair children
were made slaves.

IV.

There were death and devastation where'er the
Moslems came ;

The earth was red with Christian blood, the sky
was red with flame ;

And shrieks of agony arose that reached the
echoing heaven ;

And imploring cries for mercy, where no mercy
e'er was given ;

And groans and curses, shouts and yells, filled the
affrighted air,—
There was death along the Danube, there was
terror everywhere.

V.

From the mountains of Armenia, from Scio's
sunny isle ;
From the banks of the Euphrates and the valley
of the Nile ;
From the sterile rock of Aden and the groves of
Adalie ;
From the shores of the dark Euxine and the
Adriatic sea,
The infidels had gathered like the locusts' count-
less swarms ;
Roumelia's plains were white with tents, and
bright with blazing arms.

VI.

They marched from Adrianople to the fortress of
Belgrade,
With the standard of the Prophet triumphantly
displayed ;
And the Sultan rode before them, with the Vizier
on his right,
The dreaded Kara Mustapha, to lead them in
the fight.

They crossed the sluggish Szava, and came up
the Danube's side,
While twenty thousand Tartar horse spread
terror far and wide.

VII.

Before them lay fair vine-clad hills, and fields of
waving grain ;
Behind them lay a desert, and the bodies of the
slain.
Lorraine essayed to check them a moment as
they passed ;
But his army was swept backwards, like dead
leaves by autumn's blast ;
And the infidels, resistless, reached Vienna un-
opposed ;
And around the fated city their besieging lines
they closed.

VIII.

Where'er the Tartar horsemen rode, the earth
with blood was dyed ;
And blazing towns and villages were seen on
every side :
In wild affright, the people fled where hope of
safety lay ;
And a cry ran through all Germany of terror
and dismay,—

“The Turks are at Vienna! O God! if it should
fall,
And their ruthless hordes, unhindered, be let
loose upon us all!

IX.

“The country is defenceless; there’s no army in
the land,
That can stay the fierce invaders, or one day
before them stand;
There is no one in all Christendom able to strike
the blow
That shall save the noble city from the san-
guinary foe,
Or drive back the fiery tempest of red war that
onward rolls—
No one but Sobieski and his ever-conquering
Poles.”

X.

To him the haughty Kaiser, a humble suppliant
bends;
The proudest monarch in the world, to him im-
ploring sends:
“The Turks are at Vienna! they have come with
sword and flame,
And the standard of their prophet, to destroy
the Christian name.

Oh! arm as our defender; let thy banner be
displayed
At the head of thy brave legions, and hasten to
our aid."

XI.

Thus doth the haughty Leopold on Sobieski
call;
He little loves the Germans, and the Kaiser
least of all;
But the Moslems are his mortal foes, and blood
for vengeance cries;
And the groans of dying Christians he hears
around him rise:
"Go tell your lord, the Kaiser, my aid I freely
yield,
And will hasten with my army, when 'tis ready,
to the field."

XII.

His promise of assistance allayed the wild
affright;
And the slow but sturdy Germans began to arm
for fight;
And, when they once arouse them, woe to the
foe that stands
In the battle-field before them, when they lift
their iron hands.

They thought on their brave fathers and the glorious days gone by ;
And the spirit of the Teuton race broke forth in one loud cry :

XIII.

“ Shall the empire of the Cæsars by rude hordes
be overthrown ?
Shall a mosque be seen within the holy city of
Cologne ?
Shall the crescent high above the cross on its
cathedral shine,
And the horses of the Tartars drink the waters
of the Rhine ?
Shall infidels the tombs of Aix and its holy
shrines profane,
And a sultan sit triumphant on the throne of
Charlemagne ? ”

XIV.

But meanwhile from Vienna came more urgent
calls for aid ;
Day by day the place grew weaker, and its fall
was scarcely stayed :
The haughty Kaiser trembled for his capital and
throne,
And he wrote to Sobieski, “ Come, if thou come
alone :

There's a bridge across the Danube—my army
there doth wait ;
Haste, lead it to the city's aid, or it will be too
late."

XV.

Sobieski got the letter, and, calling for his
steed,
He sprang into the saddle, and he rode with
flying speed ;
He bade his legions follow, and pressed forward,
night and day,
With two thousand horsemen only to guard him
on the way :
Ere yet of his departure the Kaiser was aware,
He reached the Danube, but he found no bridge
nor army there.

XVI.

Anger and indignation blazed in his royal eye :
" Does the Kaiser think my single arm can make
the Moslems fly ?
What useless trifling on his part my presence to
invoke !
Where is the army—where the bridge—of which
his letter spoke ?

I came here in *his* cause alone, not in my own to
fight ;
Am I a poor adventurer, to bear this mocking
slight ?”

XVII.

The captains of the Kaiser and proud princes
stood around ;
They felt he spoke with justice, and they looked
upon the ground ;
Lorraine, the gallant soldier, with frankness
seized his hand :
“ Sire, my brave army and myself will fight
’neath thy command ;
All that the German princes can do shall soon
be done,
And, if thou wilt but lead us, the victory is
won.”

XVIII.

While yet Lorraine was speaking, there came in
breathless haste,
Like one that flees to save his life when he is
hardly chased,
A man who bore a letter concealed beneath his
vest ;
It was from valiant Stahremberg, and to Lor-
raine addressed :

The bearer, favoured by the night, had swum
the Danube's flood ;
His garments yet were dripping as before them
all he stood.

XIX.

Lorraine glanced at the letter, and he gave it to
the king ;
“ Read, sire,” he said impressively, “ the tidings
it doth bring.”
The words were few and simple, “ There's no
time to be lost !”
Sobieski's anger vanished : “ The Danube *must*
be crossed !
Haste, let the bridge be finished ; my army now
is near :
If once we gain the other side, there will be
naught to fear.”

XX.

Meanwhile, the German levies were assembling
in full force,
And marching for Vienna, a-down the Danube's
course ;
The brave Bavarians were the first, full thirteen
thousand strong ;
The people cheered and blessed them as they
boldly marched along ;

The ever-valiant Swabians, a martial band,
passed by ;
But the stout Saxon soldiers most pleased Sobieski's eye.

XXI.

By this time, his own army had reached the
Danube's stream ;
The Germans shouted loud for joy to see their
lances gleam ;
And Sobieski felt his heart swell with a soldier's
pride,
When he saw his matchless cavalry in splendour
past him ride ;
When he saw his own brave legions, and heard
their heavy tread—
The men before whose face so oft the Moslem
foe had fled.

XXII.

With shouts and acclamations and loud cheers
their king they greet,
Who never stopped to count his foes, and never
knew defeat :
The Germans marked their brave array, so glorious to behold,
Their glittering helms and lances, and their
cuirasses of gold ;

And they gazed with admiration on the bearing
and the mien
Of those famed and matchless horsemen, whose
backs no foe had seen.

XXIII.

When these in martial splendour across the
bridge had passed,
There came marching a battalion on which all
eyes were cast ;
Their faces were begrimed with dust, their
clothes were poor and torn,
And the shreds of an old banner above their
ranks were borne ;
Never before were soldiers seen in such wretched
guise ;
And there rose from the spectators loud mur-
murs of surprise :

XXIV.

" Surely the king of Poland will not send *them*
to the fight !
For the honour of his country, they were better
out of sight ;
Their appearance is so wretched, their spirit
must be small."
" That band," cried Sobieski. " is the bravest of
them all ;

And thus in tattered garments, and in poor array
they go ;
For they've sworn they'll clothe them only in the
rich spoils of the foe."

XXV.

Both armies crossed the river, but the Kahlen-
berg still rose—
A long and lofty mountain wall, between them
and their foes ;
Its sides were steep and rugged, channelled deep
by winter floods ;
The roads were only broken paths that wound
midst rocks and woods,
Where the strong and active hunter could have
scarcely forced his way :
A thousand men upon the heights had kept
them all at bay.

XXVI.

But the Turks, secure in numbers, had let them
build the bridge ;
And now, with fatal carelessness, unguarded left
the ridge ;
They but thought some bands of Germans were
hovering round about,
Who would take to flight the moment they be-
held a Turkish scout :

They knew not and believed not the Polish king
was there ;
For the other Christian leaders but little did
they care.

XXVII.

Slow and toilsome was their progress up the
rugged mountain's side ;
The horsemen led the horses they could no
longer ride ;
Their cannon they were forced to leave behind
them on the plain,
Save thirty which the Poles dragged up with
ceaseless toil and pain ;
Each man his own food carried, and pushed up-
wards as he might ;
Three long, laborious days were spent before
they reached the height.

XXVIII.

The German army kept the left, towards the
Danube's flow ;
The valiant Poles were on the right, and nearest
to the foe.
'Tis said some vanward Germans with panic fear
were stirred
When they saw the turbaned Moslems, and their
cries of " Allah ! " heard ;

But Sobieski, smiling, said, "Those shouts I love
to hear,
And the thunder of their cannon is like music to
my ear."

XXIX.

When the Christians reached the summit, night
had fallen on the scene ;
But the sky was clear and cloudless, and the full
moon shone serene ;
Her calm reflection rested on the Danube's placid
tide,
Which seemed to slumber in its course, so
smoothly did it glide ;
And the bright stars—those beautiful and silent
worlds of light,
Blazed with unwonted splendour in heaven's
eternal height.

XXX.

Night had fallen, and the Christians sought a
few hours' needed rest,
Ere they, for the approaching fight, their toil-
worn ranks addressed ;
But the ceaseless roar of cannon in the Turkish
trenches broke
The stillness of the mountain, and the wearied
soldiers woke,

No matter : when the shades of night shall
darken earth again,
They shall sleep the sleep of victors or of death
on yonder plain.

XXXI.

But Sobieski sought not repose within his tent :
At a taper-lighted table, with pen in hand, he
bent.
All the anxious preparations had been made for
the great strife ;
He was writing, like a lover, a fond letter to his
wife :
Notwithstanding all the bitterness she on his life
had cast,
He loved her when he wed her, and he loved her
to the last.

XXXII.

There was terror in Vienna the night the Kaiser
fled :
The Turks were near, the sky all round with
blazing towns was red ;
The helpless citizens were left defenceless 'gainst
the foe :
They wrung their hands in anguish, and they
uttered cries of woe ;

The boldest cursed the monarch, the pious knelt
in prayer,
And strong men wept like women, and yielded
to despair.

XXXIII.

Next day, the valiant Stahremberg—since then
a deathless name—
To the terror-stricken city to allay the panic
came.
The citizens thronged round him, with sad looks
and piteous cries ;
But at the cheerful words he spake they felt their
spirits rise :
“ I have come to share your fortunes, and within
these walls to wait,
As your captain and your comrade, yours and
the city’s fate.

XXXIV.

“ Ten thousand trusty soldiers will presently be
here ;
With this small but valiant army there needs be
little fear :
If you will act as brave men should, and join
them in the fray,
The walls shall be defended, and the foe be
kept at bay ;

And never shall a Moslem within the city
tread,
Till my brave soldiers and myself are numbered
with the dead."

XXXV.

They promised to stand by him at the peril of
their lives,
For their homes and for their altars, for their
children and their wives ;
And they vowed in sternest manner, with one
consenting breath,
He who spoke of a surrender should die the
traitor's death :
How well they kept their promise when the time
of trial came,
Is traced in blood-stained letters in the laurelled
book of fame.

XXXVI.

Scarce had the soldiers entered and the city
gates been closed,
When three hundred thousand Moslems their
guns to it opposed ;
Their trenches and their batteries stretched
everywhere around ;
Their mines in all directions were pushed beneath
the ground ;

From gun to gun the lightning flash of quick
explosion ran,
The dreadful cannon thundered, and the storm of
fire began.

XXXVII.

Two months the siege had lasted : scarce five
thousand men remain
To defend the falling city : all the rest are with
the slain ;
And pestilence and sickness, and fatigue and want
of food,
Had swept away more thousands than the foe
that sought their blood ;
The walls were breached and undermined—the
fatal hour had come,
And the next morning's dread assault would seal
the city's doom.

XXXVIII.

From the high tower of St. Stephen's, whence
were seen both hill and plain,
Long they had looked for coming aid, but they
had looked in vain ;
The watchman there watched all the night, and
all the day he gazed ;
He saw but Moslem soldiers and the cruel fires
they raised :

There was no Christian army nor Christian banner
there,—
The hope that once had filled their breasts now
yielded to despair.

XXXIX.

Stout Stahremberg was wounded, and he trem-
bled in his soul,
When the great bell of St. Stephen's for the next
assault should toll ;
But he bade the suffering citizens still fight, and
cherish hope ;
And the watchman on the Kahlenberg to fix his
telescope ;
" King Sobieski's coming, and, though Poland
lies afar,
Not swifter moves the lightning than that thun-
derbolt of war."

XL.

Night had fallen on the city : it was calm and
clear and fine ;
The clock upon St. Stephen's church had struck
the hour of nine ;
The watchman on the Kahlenberg still kept his
steadfast eye,
When a stream of blazing rockets rushed upwards
to the sky.

The people heard his shouts of joy, they answered
with loud cheers ;
Some knelt in thankful prayer to Heaven, and
some wept joyous tears.

XLI.

But Stahremberg addressed them : " Let each
man-keep his post ;
The Moslem in his death-fight is to be dreaded
most ;
We must help our valiant brethren, and do what-
e'er we can :
The numbers still against us are double man for
man.
Abate not in your vigilance throughout the pre-
sent night ;
And, when our friends attack the foe, we'll aid
them in the fight.

XLII.

[Soon as the first faint twilight of the coming morn
gave sign,
Sobieski took his charger, and he rode along the
line ;
He saw his army all prepared and ready for the
fray :
Their ranks were put in motion at the dawning
of the day ;

And troop by troop, and file by file, the winding
columns pressed
Up the high Leopoldsberg, and halted on its
crest.

XLIII.

The sun rose, and a flood of light o'er heaven
and earth he threw ;
But a soft sea of silvery mist hid all below from
view ;
The vapours yielded to his beams, and, floating
far and wide,
They vanished like a vision as they reached the
mountain's side ;
And the glorious panorama they for a while con-
cealed,
In all its morning freshness and beauty was
revealed.

XLIV.

Far to the south, the Styrian Alps 'gainst the
blue heaven arose,
Their sides veiled in faint purple haze, their sum-
mits white with snows ;
The Carpathian mountains, eastward, half hid in
mist were seen ;
And the spires of distant Presburg, and the
Leytha's slopes of green ;

And the majestic Danube, like a flood of liquid
gold,
Reflecting the sun's splendour, through the great
valley rolled,

XLV.

Which, in the distance, stretched away, by moun-
tain walls confined,—
The beaten path of nations, the highway of
mankind.
Beneath them lay Vienna, still enwreathed in
mist and smoke :
Its walls breached by the Moslems' guns, whose
thunders ceaseless broke ;
And their tents in countless thousands stretched
mile after mile around,
And, like a second city, spread o'er all the neigh-
bouring ground.]

XLVI.

The Vizier's proud pavilion high in gorgeous
splendour towered,
Adorned with founts and gardens, and by shady
groves embowered ;
Above its walls of crimson silk a glittering cres-
cent sprung,
And the standard of the Prophet in front defiant
hung ;

But the Christians little heeded the fair scene
that lay below,—
They but grasped their arms more fiercely as
they looked upon the foe.

XLVII.

A banner with a field of red and cross of silver
white,
Was here unfurled before them, and they shouted
at the sight ;
But when from the small chapel sweetly pealed
the matin bell,
Their heads they all uncovered, and upon their
knees they fell ;
And the voice of God's own servant was raised
in solemn prayer,
And the holy man passed through their ranks
and blessed them kneeling there.

XLVIII.

The sacred service ended, King Sobieski
spoke,—
While the Turkish guns still louder the mountain
echoes woke,—
“ Brave friends and warriors, yonder, in the plain
beneath you, lie
The hordes of those same Moslems whom so oft
you've made to fly ;

Though now in greater numbers, and more terrible
array,
It will add but to your triumph and the glory
of the day.

XLIX.

“Remember Slobodisza,* that proud, victorious
name;
Remember Podhałce,† where you won immortal
fame;
Remember glorious Choczim,‡ by the dark
Dniester’s side,
Where forty thousand Moslems with their blood
the river dyed;
Remember red Soczawa,§ where you slaughtered
them in flight;
And remember, above all, the cause that brings
you here to fight.

L.

“’Tis not to save one city alone that we have
come:
In Vienna we protect and guard the whole of
Christendom.
Your cause is just and holy,—death a crown of
glory brings;
You fight not for your earthly lord, but for the
King of kings.

* Slo-bo-deesh-à.

† Pod-ha-cé-tseh.

‡ Ko-cheem.

§ So-cha-va.

His people's deadliest enemies are those whom
there you see :

If you wish for heaven or glory, my brave soldiers,
follow me !”

LI.

Like the roar of the great ocean—like the thun-
der's echoing swell,

A long, loud shout burst from them, that pealed
the Moslems' knell ;

Every sword unsheathed was glittering, uplifted
every lance ;

The loud report of cannon gave the signal for
advance ;

The standard of the cross was raised, and full of
heart and hope,

All burning for the battle, they poured down the
mountain's slope.

LII.

On their left the mighty Danube, on their right
the winding Wien,

In their front the leagured city, and the Moslem
host between ;

They saw their banners waving, and their armour
flashing bright ;

For the infidels stood ready to meet them in the
fight ;

On the ground beneath the mountain they had
drawn up all their force—
A hundred thousand footmen, and forty thousand
horse.

LIII.

With their ranks in martial order, and resistless
as the tide,
The long lines of the Christians poured down
the mountain side ;
And nearer, and still nearer, to the Moslem host
they came,
When there burst from both the armies a quick
flash of vivid flame ;
And a loud and rattling volley told the conflict
had begun—
There were seventy thousand Christians, but the
foe were two to one.

LIV.

High o'er the din of battle, rose a shout upon
the right ;
The Polish horse were charging where the foe
made stoutest fight ;
Their leader's garb was azure blue, the steed he
rode was bay,
His naked sword extended in his right hand
showed the way ;

And his high and fearless spirit in his squadrons
shone again :
Such a leader and such horsemen have been
never seen since then.

LV.

It needed not the lance-borne plume conspicuous
o'er the field ;
Nor the royal arms of Poland emblazoned on
his shield ;
It needed not the glittering throng of gilded
warriors nigh ;
It needed not his name they shouted as their
battle-cry ;
Nor yet the regal splendours that on his person
shone,
To tell 'twas Sobieski, the Polish king alone.

LVI.

As herds of buffaloes headlong trample the
yielding grass,
So, through the thickest Moslem ranks the Poles
resistless pass ;
The Tartars and the Spahis in swarms came
thronging round ;
They fell before the lancers, and their corpses
strewed the ground ;

The bravest of the Janissaries fought, but fought
in vain ;
Despite their utmost efforts, they were forced
back on the plain.

LVII.

Such was the first great onset the Polish lancers
made ;
Three thousand Moslems lifeless upon the ground
they laid ;
Then came a lull, like that between the out-
bursts of a storm,
While from the rear their comrades' ranks, ad-
vancing, should re-form.
Much had been gained already, but more was to
be done
Ere the foe should be defeated, and the victory
be won.

LVIII.

In scarcely lessened numbers the Moslem host
now stood
Before their camp, like furious wolves maddened
with taste of blood ;
Between them and the Christians extended a
ravine ;
And cannon all along their front with gaping
mouths were seen :

The vizier and his bravest troops had taken here
their place ;
And Sobieski and his Poles opposed them face
to face.

LIX.

All was ready. Sobieski with his sabre gave the
sign :
“ Charge ! ” and ten thousand horsemen rushed
at the Moslem line.
They trembled when they saw the dreaded
squadrons of the Poles,
With their bristling lances levelled, and their
streaming banderoles ;
While shouts of “ Sobieski, Sobieski ! ” rent the
air :
“ By Allah,” cried the Tartar khan, “ the Polish
king is there ! ”

LX.

As cloud on cloud when tempests rage, o'er the
black heaven doth sweep ;
As billow after billow rolls resistless o'er the
deep ;
So came the thundering squadrons : through the
Moslem line they broke,
With their keen and glittering lances, as the
lightning rends the oak ;

Ne'er pausing for a moment, at a second mass
they rushed ;
The charge was irresistible, it yielded, and was
crushed.

LXI.

The Spahis fought with courage almost equal to
their own,
And bravely tried to stop them, but they soon
were overthrown ;
And the victorious lancers on their course triumphant went
Through the vizier's scattered squadrons straight
for his gilded tent :
Like the destroying angel with his drawn sword
at their head
The Turks saw Sobieski—they knew him, and
they fled.

LXII.

In an instant, all was terror, confusion, and dismay ;
The vizier, in the fleeing throng, himself was
swept away ;
He saw the Poles victorious, he heard their
deafening cheers,
He cursed the fate of battle, and in his rage
shed tears ;

And the Tartar khan said to him, when he urged
him yet to fight,
“Where the king of Poland is, there’s no safety
but in flight.”

LXIII.

All was over : the vast Moslem host fled from
that fatal plain,
Where five and twenty thousand of their bravest
men lay slain ;
They left their cannon and their camp, with all
its precious spoils,
To reward the Polish army for their labours and
their toils ;
And the victors slept upon the ground they had
so nobly won—
They had saved the Christian bulwark, and their
glorious task was done.

LXIV.

There was joy within Vienna when the sun went
down that night—
They had seen the Poles victorious and the Mos-
lems put to flight ;
There was joy within Vienna when the sun next
morning rose,
And the Polish standard floated o’er the camp
where late were foes ;

There was joy within Vienna when in glorious
array
Sobieski rode in triumph to the city the next
day.

LXV.

The people rushed in thousands to meet him as
he came ;
They hailed him with exultant shouts, they wept,
they blessed his name,
They kissed his very garments, at his horse's
feet they kneeled ;
They called him their Defender, their Saviour,
their Shield ;
And the priest stood at the altar, while his face
with fervour shone,
Exclaiming, "There was sent from God a man
whose name was John."

LXVI.

The cannon thundered from the walls and a
thousand banners waved
To welcome the heroic king who had the city
saved.
Amid the gratitude of all, the Kaiser shunned
alone
The defender of his country, his capital, and
throne ;

Till forced by very shame at last, constrained
and void of grace,
With cold words scant of courtesy, he met him
face to face.

LXVII.

But the ungrateful Kaiser's thanks to him were
little worth,
Whose glorious achievement was the praise of
all the earth ;
'Twas spoken of in every land and told in every
tongue ;
The whole of Christian Europe with acclama-
tions rung ;
And the name of Sobieski shall live through all
time to come
As the Saviour of Vienna, and the Shield of
Christendom,

HILDEGARDE:

A LEGEND OF FALKENBURG.

THE ruins of Falkenburg are on the left bank of the Rhine, about five or six miles below Bingen—one of the most interesting and beautiful parts of the river. 'The tomb spoken of at the end of the poem is described in Victor Hugo's book on the Rhine as "a beautiful slab of red Heilbron freestone, of the fourteenth century; upon which lay, in almost full relief, a knight armed *cap-à-pie*, with the head only deficient. Under the feet of this warrior were inscribed, in Roman capitals, these words, somewhat defaced, but not entirely erased :

"'VOX TACVIT PERIIT LVX NOX RVIT ET RVIT
VMBRA
VIR CARET IN TVMBA QVO CARET EFFIGIES.'"

As he afterwards remarks, "an inscription without date, an epitaph without a name, and a knight without a head." There is neither history, tale, nor tradition—nothing to give us any information concerning this mysterious tomb and its unknown occupant.

PART FIRST.

THE Rhine—the far-famed, castled Rhine,
The mirror-stream of chivalry !
What legends hang about its course,
From Mount St. Gothard to the sea !

Most famous of historic streams,
Its banks have long been classic ground ;
From the dim ages of the past,
In story and in song renowned.

The Rhine—the legendary Rhine !
What tales so wondrous e'er were told
As those of its fiend-haunted wilds,
Its lovely nymphs, and knights of old !

River of battle and romance,
Chivalric Rhine ! to it belong
The records of the historic page,
The legend, and the poet's song.

It drinks the cool, clear glacier-stream,
 'Neath azure skies and Alpine snows ;
A brook, a torrent, and a lake,
 It rushes on, and greater grows.

It winds by many a castled-rock,
 And many a dark and dreadful steep,
Where grim old ruins o'er its flood
 Their watch like jealous guardians keep.

The Rhine—the wild, romantic Rhine—
 The wondrous, spectre-haunted stream !
Its sight brings back the distant past :
 I gaze upon it, and I dream.

I see these castles as they stood
 Many a hundred years ago ;
I hear the challenge and reply,
 As mail-clad horsemen come and go.

I see dark forests stretching far,
 Where trees no longer have a place ;
I listen to the hunting horn
 Of stout old Rhinegraves in the chase.

I hear the merry laugh and shout
 Of many a joyous party bent
On the high sport of falconry,
 Or bound to some great tournament.

How fair the ladies whom I see
On pillioned palfreys gaily ride !
How brave and courteous are the knights
Who canter proudly by their side !

Oh, for the days when noble deeds
Alone gained grace in beauty's eyes—
When men held honour more than life,
And fame, not wealth, the sought-for prize !

Oh, for the days of chivalry—
Of tournament and glittering throng,
And masque and pageantry and feast,
And lady-love and minstrel song !

Oh, for a life-long summer day
To gaze on yonder glorious stream,
And give my wandering fancy play
In many a visionary dream !

'Twas festal time at Falkenburg,
And the old, gloomy towers looked gay,
With many a wreath and scutcheon decked,
And many a banner's proud display.

And there was gathered many a knight
From far and near along the Rhine,
To see the lovely Hildegard,
And pledge her in the ruby wine.

The lord of Falkenburg came forth,
Attired, as wont, in sombre vest ;
His words were few, but he with bow
And court'sy grave received each guest.

He was a strange, stern, silent man,
Who seldom spoke and never smiled ;
Nor feared, 'twas said, God, man, nor fiend,
Nor the dark demons of the wild.

When young he revelled not nor drank,
Nor dance nor dame gave him delight ;
But few could match him in a tilt,
And fewer still in deadly fight.

Half knight, half outlaw, he had been
The boldest of those lawless men
Who toll and tribute claimed from all
That ventured near their castle-den.

Such was the lord of Falkenburg,
And so he lived till near mid-life ;
His only virtue skill in arms,
His only pleasure scenes of strife.

One day, when hunting in the wood,
Attracted by an outcry wild,
He rescued from a robber gang
A gentle lady and her child.

He brought them home to Falkenburg,
Where they found shelter, care, and rest ;
And when a month had passed away,
He wed his lone and lovely guest.

All wondered, but no one could tell
How he, so cold and stern of mood,
Had sought, or seeking came to win,
A dame so beautiful and good.

Whether her beauty moved his heart,
Or pity for her lonely state,
Or she, through gratitude or love,
Took him, it boots not to relate.

But even wedlock's tender joys
To that dark visage brought no smile ;
And from his rude accustomed life
Its softening power could ne'er beguile.

A year passed, when, from unknown cause,
He took a small but trusty band,
Left wife and castle, country—all,
And journeyed to the Holy Land.

Some said it was to gain renown
In God's cause in that distant clime ;
Some said it was to be absolved
From the deep guilt of some dark crime.

His wife knew not, or, if she knew,
The secret cause she told to none ;
Her face, long sad, grew thin and pale :
She died ere the next year was done.

Her child, the lovely Hildegarde,
Within a neighbouring convent found
The nurture that her age required,
And kindly care from all around.

Years passed and passed, and men began
To doubt of Falkenburg's return,
When he came back but little changed,
Save older, darker, and more stern.

Few were the words that he addressed,
To those who hastened at his call
To greet their lord with due respect,
And welcome him to court and hall.

And when he rode within the gate,
Though twelve long years had passed away,
'Twas with the mood and look of one
Who had been absent but a day.

No more, howe'er, he sallied forth
The leader of a mounted band ;
No more he cared for deeds of arms,
Nor took delight in lance or brand.

There was an old, neglected tower,
Which of the castle formed a part,
And in a gloomy chamber there
He practised some unholy art.

In truth, it was a fitting place,
With stains of blood the floor was dyed ;
And hence 'twas called the haunted tower,
And long had been unoccupied.

There, in that chamber, night and day,
He would remain with bolted door,
Busy at his mysterious work,
And muttering incantations o'er.

Thus lived the lord of Falkenburg,
Shut up within his lonely tower ;
More feared than he had been in youth,
When leading on his armed power.

And Hildegard had now become
A gentle maiden of sixteen,
Pure as the dew on lily flower,
And lovely as the lost Undine.

Her presence seemed to gladden earth—
A sunbeam shedding there its light,
That filled the hearts of all with joy,
And made the world around her bright.

Such was the maiden over whom
He claimed to have a parent's sway,
And brought her home to Falkenburg
To celebrate her natal day.

And for her sake alone were these
Unwonted preparations made,
And guests invited from afar,
And festive pageantry displayed.

The best and bravest of the Rhine
With joyful hearts had hastened there,
Eager to catch a single smile,
Or win perchance the peerless fair.

PART SECOND.

THE western sky was all ablaze
Where the descending sun shone bright,
And from a thousand gorgeous clouds,
Threw a rich flood of crimson light.

Beside the gate of Falkenburg
The armed and bearded warder stood,
And gazed upon the splendid scene
Now slowly fading and subdued.

Just as the last gleam died away,
The sound of hoofs fell on his ear ;
And soon a horseman met his sight,
Who, riding thitherward, drew near.

He scanned him long and carefully
As slowly up the hill he came ;
The stranger wore a suit of mail,
And rode a steed of powerful frame.

"Halt there!" the warder cried aloud;
"Make known thy name and quality;
Thou'rt welcome if a bidden guest,
For to all such these halls are free."

"I am," he said, "a Swabian knight
Whom chance alone hath brought this way;
I but some slight refreshment crave,
And shelter till the coming day."

"Sir knight, here tarry while thou wilt:
Thou hast the welcome of my lord
To be received among his guests
And join them at the festal board."

Thus spoke the warder by command,
When known the stranger's rank and need;
The latter rode within the gate,
And there dismounted from his steed.

The hall was filled with joyous sounds,
And mirth enlivened every guest,
When the young stranger entered there,
And took his seat among the rest.

The feast went on, the mirth ran high,
With many a jest and merry laugh;
And many a joyous pledge they gave,
And oft the ruddy wine did quaff.

The banquet ended, and the lord
Of Falkenburg rose from his seat :
“ My honoured friends, ye now shall see
The lady ye have come to greet.”

So saying, from the banquet hall
For a brief time their host withdrew ;
Meanwhile, the dishes were removed,
And wine and spices served anew.

He reappeared with Hildegard,
Whom he led gently by the hand ;
The guests arose and, bowing low,
In deep respect before her stand.

Their souls were in their eyes : they gazed,
Silent and speechless with delight ;
They almost feared to draw a breath,
Lest she might vanish from their sight.

For never mortal eye on earth
Beheld a being half so fair ;
Nor saint in visionary mood
Angel that might with her compare.

In form all loveliness and grace,
She seemed to float before their eyes,
In her white, silver-cinctured robe,
Like some bright vision from the skies.

Back from her smooth and spotless brow,
In floating tresses half-unrolled,
Her hair below her girdle fell,
A glistening flood of wavy gold.

Her eyes were like the vault of heaven—
A bright, clear, deep, transparent blue ;
Her cheek was like a lily leaf,
With rose-tints shining faintly through.

The strange scene caused a timid thrill,
But yet her face with pleasure glowed,
As she perceived the deep respect
Their silent admiration showed.

The lord of Falkenburg now said,
“ My gentle guests, behold the maid
For whom our festal board is spread,
And this gay pageantry displayed.

“ This is her birthnight, and for her
The heavens auspiciously are starred ;
Now, therefore, pledge we one and all
The health of the fair Hildegarde.”

They filled their goblets to the brim,
They raised them high aloft in air,
“ To Hildegarde ! ” they cried, and drank—
“ To Hildegarde, the peerless fair ! ”

The hall re-echoed with her name,
Her cheek with pleasure flushed anew ;
She bowed in deep acknowledgment,
And, smiling, gracefully withdrew.

Soon as the joyous sounds had ceased,
And silence was again restored,
The lord of Falkenburg thus spoke
To those who sat around his board :

“ My youthful friends, if any here
To win fair Hildegard aspire,
Let him now give his pledge to me,
And, oath-bound, do what I require.

“ What knight among you first would win
The Golden Lily of the Rhine ?”
They rose, exclaiming one and all,
“ She shall be mine !—and mine !—and mine !”

“ Peace !” cried the lord of Falkenburg,
“ What means this loud unruly tone !
As I shall choose, so falls the chance
To make fair Hildegard your own.

“ But, first, take oath what I require
None to his fellow will declare :”
They kissed the cross-hilts of their swords,
And cried aloud, “ We swear ! we swear !”

“ Enough ! now take I whom I will ;
And, John of Steinbach, be thou first
To learn the price of Hildegarde,
And win her when the oath’s rehearsed.”

Brave John of Steinbach long was held
The champion of the Middle-Rhine ;
With fearless heart, and iron arm,
And head that never reeled with wine,

No danger ever made him shrink ;
No match he found in mortal foe ;
Nor did he ever need to strike
His victim but a single blow.

With joy the favoured knight arose,
The others’ brows began to lower ;
Their host and he withdrew, and sought
The chamber in the haunted tower.

The rest felt that their chance was lost,
When it with John of Steinbach lay ;
They knew no danger could deter,
Nor risk of death cause him to stay.

Silent they sat, with moody brows,
And feelings close akin to hate
Towards the knight, who, favoured thus,
Would soon return with joy elate.

He came, but with a troubled look ;
His aspect caused a sudden thrill ;
Upon him every eye was fixed,
And all within the hall grew still.

Their sombre host the silence broke :
“ Since John of Steinbach’s hopes are marred,
Arnold of Arnheim, follow me,
If thou wouldst win fair Hildegarde.”

A braver or more dauntless knight,
Never with lance transfixed a foe ;
Nor lived there man could point the road
Arnold of Arnheim durst not go.

He instant rose and left the hall,
With kindling eye and glowing cheek ;
But, when he entered it again,
He trembled, and to none would speak.

The guests grew pale : at last their host
Bade Eberhard of Limburg rise
And follow him, if he would win
The beautiful and peerless prize.

He looked triumphantly around,
And left the hall with eager pace
But he returned an altered man,
With dread depicted in his face.

"Now," cried the lord of Falkenburg,
"Since these have failed, who next will try?"
But all in fearful silence sat,
Nor gave by word nor look reply.

A pause ensued : the stranger rose,
And drank a long deep draught of wine,—
"Despite of dangers, fiends, and fate,
The lovely Hildegard is mine!"

Then with a firm, decided step,
He passed along before them all ;
And joined the lord of Falkenburg,
Who led him from the banquet hall.

They sat there breathless with suspense ;
They feared, yet knew not what to fear ;
Their eyes fixed on the fatal door
By which the two should re-appear.

And each long at his neighbour looked,
And read his thoughts, but no one spoke ;
A sudden sound of horses' hoofs
At last the painful silence broke.

Some one was riding from below,
The clattering sounds passed through the gate ;
The oath was taken ! and the knight,
Reckless, had gone to meet his fate.

They felt a sadness o'er them steal,
An undefined and nameless fear ;
While the now fast-receding sounds
Fell faint and fainter on the ear.

The stranger came not back again,
Nor re-appeared the castle's lord ;
The wine that filled the brimming cups
Remained untasted on the board.

Awe-struck and silent, there they sat,
As hour by hour was slowly tolled—
Living, but motionless and mute,
Like the enchanted knights of old.

They sat there till the lamps grew pale,
And torches threw a sickly glare ;
And the first light of coming day
Shone faintly through the cold grey air.

All things resumed their wonted look,
The shadows faded on the wall ;
Then one by one they silent rose
And left that dreary dismal hall.

They mounted, and rode slowly forth,
But each man's face was pale as death ;
And they were far from Falkenburg
Ere they could freely draw their breath.

PART THIRD.

TIME held its ceaseless, silent flight,
Day came and went, succeeding day ;
Weeks followed, gliding into months—
A year had all but passed away.

And still the lord of Falkenburg
Kept close within the haunted tower,
His eyes more deeply sunk in thought, .
His gloomy brow more wont to lower.

The unknown guest who left at night,
Upon the Rhine was seen no more ;
Some said he was in Eastern lands ;
Some that he died on Afric's shore.

Howe'er it was, a rumour ran
That twelve months was the time assigned
To win the maid, or she was free
To choose according to her mind.

The stranger's fate was still unknown ;
But hope rose high in every breast
To be the maiden's favoured knight—
The envied rival of the rest.

And Hildegard herself—she seemed
Too pure for such a world as this ;
Hers were the calm, sweet joys of heaven,
A foretaste of its future bliss.

She dwelt at Falkenburg—a dove
Whose nest in a dark ruin lies ;
She mixed with beings of the earth—
A purer being from the skies.

And day by day went up to heaven
Her matin song and vesper prayer
And unseen angels hovered round
Their sister angel kneeling there.

She loved to look from the high towers
Down on the shadow-pictured stream ;
She loved to view the distant hills,
Like the faint landscape of a dream.

She loved to gaze, hour after hour,
On the great blue vault of the sky ;
And watch the soft, white, shining clouds,
Like palaces of pearl float by.

She loved to sing ; and when she sang
All nature round her would rejoice ;
The ravished listeners silent stood,
And thought they heard an angel's voice.

The aged priest to whom she knelt,
And all her secret thoughts made known,
Felt as if Heaven spoke through her,
And need of grace was all his own.

For in that pure and guileless breast
No thought unhallowed found a place ;
Nor earthly passion fired that eye,
Nor flushed that fair, angelic face.

With calm and joyful confidence
She ever to his presence came ;
But as she knelt before him now,
Deep agitation shook her frame.

“O father, guide me ! for I feel
There is a fearful hour at hand ;
And shadowy shapes are hovering near,
And demons from a distant land.

And a dread sense of coming ill
Doth weigh upon my troubled mind ;
And oft I tremble with alarm,
From cause unknown and undefined.”

“ Daughter, fear not, whate’er betide ;
The grace of Heaven doth with thee rest ;
Fix, then, thy thoughts on it alone,
And calmly hope thou for the best.

“ ’Tis not within the power of man
The unknown future to foresee ;
But with to-morrow’s rising sun
Thy birthday comes, and thou art free.

“ God grant, whate’er the plots of men,
Or efforts of the Evil One,
It bring peace to thy troubled soul
Ere its much-wished-for light be done.”

And Hildegard retired to sleep
The sweet sleep that alone is given
To such as she, the pure in soul—
To those alone at peace with Heaven.

Such was her wonted rest ; but now,
Slumber had scarcely closed her eyes,
When troubled dreams began to come,
And fearful visions to arise.

She stood within the banquet hall,
As she had stood a year ago ;
She saw the guests, the glittering lights,
She saw the wine in ruddy flow.

Though dazzled by the shining lamps,
And by the flaming torches' glare,
She could distinguish every face
Assembled round the table there.

She saw the wine-cup lifted high,
She heard the joyous laugh and song ;
And then their faces all grew pale,
And agitation shook the throng.

Something the lord of Falkenburg
Had said, she felt, concerning her ;
He beckoned them, they paler grew,
And, motionless, refused to stir.

At last, a knight, of noble mien
And handsome features, crossed the floor,
And left the hall with Falkenburg,
Who joined his silent guests no more.

She saw them in the haunted tower,
Where a thick darkness, worse than night,
Was deepened, rather than dispelled,
By fires of wild, unearthly light.

And Falkenburg was standing there,
His gloomy eyes fixed on the ground ;
And shapes she feared to look upon,
With threatening gestures gathered round.

The knight was kneeling on the floor,
He muttered words she could not hear ;
And Falkenburg himself grew pale,
And seemed to feel a thrill of fear.

The vision of the haunted tower
Vanished in a wild swirl of smoke ;
Her soul seemed travelling in her sleep,
And in a distant clime she woke.

Upon a burning waste of sand,
The sun glared from a cloudless sky ;
Nor brook nor river, tree nor bush,
Nor shade nor shelter, was there nigh.

Only a waste of burning sand,
Only the fierce sun glaring high,
Only a heap of broken rocks,
Whose summit seemed to reach the sky.

Only a heap of rocks on rocks,
Like broken hills on hills up-piled ;
Horrid with many a yawning gulf,
And many a cavern dark and wild.

She saw a being bowed with age,
A hoary beard o'erspread his face ;
So hideous and uncouth his form,
He scarcely seemed of human race.

There, in a dark and dismal cave,
With eyes fixed on a scroll, he sate,
Poring o'er horoscope and sign,
And planetary laws of fate.

A horseman sped across the plain,
And sought him in his rocky den ;
Perhaps a hundred years had passed,
Since he had last been seen of men.

Long time together they conferred,
And dark and troubled was his look ;
The knight was kneeling at his feet,
His frame with agitation shook.

At last he rose and led him down
Through windings of this rocky hell,
To depths ne'er trod before or since,
Where only the unblessed might dwell.

What passed between the two when there,
It were unholy to relate ;
But there the knight fulfilled his oath,
Regardless of his after fate.

Back from that dark and dismal gulf,
Slowly they groped their tortuous way ;
And, when they reached the upper world,
His guide dropped dead at sight of day.

A tempest came, and all was changed ;
No more she saw the sun's blest light ;
The wild winds howled, and all around
Was darker than the darkest night.

A sudden blaze shot from the ground,
And showed her there a headless knight ;
She started from her troubled sleep,
Trembling with horror and affright.

Her chamber was aglow with light,
But 'twas not morning's early red ;
She looked—the castle was on fire !
She sprang up wildly from her bed.

With hurried hand, around her form
A large, loose cloak she quickly cast ;
And, rushing down through court and gate,
Found safety on the hill at last.

The fire was in the haunted tower,
And men were running to and fro ;
And women, with shrill cries for help,
Bewildered, knew not where to go.

And Hildegard, confused and weak
From painful dreams and sudden fright,
With vacant gaze stared at the fire,
And trembled at each burst of light.

A sudden glare shot forth—she turned,
And, terror-stricken, sprang away ;
When, right before her on the ground,
A headless man in armour lay.

She gave a shriek, so wild, so loud,
'Twas echoed from the Lurley rock ;
And never one who heard that cry,
Till death forgot the fearful shock.

Swift as the frightened dove, she fled—
She flew o'er rock and headlong steep ;
And plunged into the flood below,
Where it runs cold and dark and deep.

Next morning, of the tower remained
But blackened walls and crumbling stones ;
And when they sought within, they found
A little heap of human bones.

But brave men wept as women weep,
For Hildegard the pure and fair ;
And all the knights that sought her love
Her birthday spent in solemn prayer.

They searched the stream but searched in vain,
Her beauteous form was never found ;
But near the spot was often heard,
At midnight, solemn music's sound.

And when the moon's soft silver beam,
At that lone hour the waters kissed ;
And all the world was wrapped in sleep,
And the deep valleys white with mist ;

'Tis said that bright angelic shapes,
Like vapours on the stream would glide,
And hover o'er the sacred spot
Where the unblemished maiden died.

There still they guard her lovely form,
Preserved unchanged from all decay,
Till it shall rise and soar with them
To brighter regions far away.

The world seemed dark when she was gone,
For she was loved and wept by all ;
But most by the brave knights who came
To pledge her in that fatal hall.

With many an earnest prayer to Heaven
To save them all from demon power,
The unknown corse, with simple rites,
They buried in the haunted tower.

There still the traveller may see
Upon an old sepulchral stone,
The figure of a headless knight,
And this to tell the tale alone :

THE VOICE IS HUSHED, AND QUENCHED THE
LIGHT ;

NIGHT HAS FALLEN, ALL IS GLOOM ;
WHAT THIS EFFIGY DOTHT WANT,
HE WANTS WHO LIES WITHIN THE TOMB.

SONGS.

'TIS MOONLIGHT ON THE SEA.

THE silver moon is pouring
Her soft light o'er the sea ;
The scene is most alluring,
Come, share it, love, with me
Let us rove along the shore,
Where the tiny wavelets play ;
Or I'll ply the feathered oar
On the waters of the bay ;
Or I'll sing a song for you,
If you'll touch the lute for me :—
'Tis moonlight on the sea, love !
'Tis moonlight on the sea !

The stars are beaming brightly ;
The sky is cloudless blue ;
The zephyrs breathe but lightly ;
The flowerets shine with dew :

Oh, come ! a tale I'll tell
Of the peris of the deep,
Whom fancy makes to dwell
Where the crystal waters sleep ;
Or, if you'd rather hear,
It a tale of love shall be :—
'Tis moonlight on the sea, love !
'Tis moonlight on the sea !

THE OWL.

MEN call the poor owl
A stupid old fowl ;
And yet he's the bird of wisdom too ;
And many a sight
He has seen at night,
Which he tells not to them, nor me, nor you ;
But he only says, " Tu-whit, tu-whoo !"

Hour after hour,
On the lonely tower
He keepeth his watch, the whole night through ;
All that is done
From set of the sun
He knows, though he tells not to me nor you ;
But he only says, " Tu-whit, tu-whoo !"

His eye doth mark,
When the night is dark,
Things which are hidden from human view ;
Why ghosts do walk,
If he could but talk,
He might tell, perhaps, to me or you ;
But he only says, "Tu-whit, tu-whoo !"

At lone midnight,
You start with affright
To hear his voice, but you'd tremble too,
With cheek all pale,
If he told his tale,
Which secret he keeps from me and you ;
And he only says, "Tu-whit, tu-whoo !"

COME TO ME.

COME to me when the star of eve
Shines in the west ;
When the rude winds that ocean heave
Sleep on his breast ;
When leaves hang still on the aspen tree,
And the soft dews fall silently ;
Oh, come to me !

Come to me when the moon doth rise
O'er the eastern hill ;
When bright stars gem the cloudless skies,
And all is still ;
When silence reigns, and the world doth sleep,
And lovers alone their watch may keep ;
Oh, come to me !

Come to me when the nightingale
Sings in the grove
His sweet yet melancholy tale
Of artless love ;
When his soft melody you hear,
So pleasing to a lover's ear,
Oh, come to me !

Come to me in that lonely hour
When earth doth rest ;
When the soul dreams, and love hath power
To make us blest ;
Then let the music of thy voice
Once more my longing heart rejoice ;
Then come to me !

THE FAIRY DELL.

THE Fairy Dell! I know it well!

It is a little woodland nook
Where the fragrant twin-flower grows,
And the wild witch-hazel throws
Its branches o'er a murmuring brook ;
Where the moonbeams love to play
When is done the garish day ;
And the lonely whip-poor-will
Sings at night when all is still,
Save the soft voice of the stream,
Like the music of a dream,
Ever, ever murmuring—
Murmuring on its way.
Oh! I know—I know full well
The woodland nook called the Fairy Dell !

The Fairy Dell! I know it well!

Beside its mossy-margined brook,
Dreaming there the summer day—
Dreaming there of thee, I lay
Till the rising moon would look
On the water gliding by ;
And the night-hawk forth would fly ;

And the bat was on the wing ;
And the whip-poor-will would sing ;
And I heard the soft-voiced stream,
Like the music of a dream,
Ever, ever murmuring—
Murmuring on its way.
Oh ! I know—I know full well
The woodland nook called the Fairy Dell !

NOTES.

GRANADA.

Amid the Alpuxarras' rocks.

The *Alpuxarras* are a chain of mountains in the rear of Granada, between the Sierra Nevada and the sea. This region is still a land of shepherds.

From wild Axarquía's summits came.

The mountains of Malaga are so called. The name signifies the "eastern" mountains.

With tumult filled the Albaycin.

The *Albaycin* is that part of the city of Granada which lies north of the Darro. It was inhabited by the poorest and most turbulent classes of the citizens.

*Co-eval with Granada's state,
The proud Alhambra hath its date.*

The famous palace of the *Alhambra* stands on a high, rocky hill to the eastward of Granada, between

the Darro and the Xenil, and looks down on the former river. It was begun by Mohammed ben Alhamar, the founder and first monarch of the kingdom of Granada, and finished by his son and successor, Mohammed II. Subsequent kings, particularly Yusef I., built additions and beautified it, till it almost equalled the wondrous palaces of the Arabian tales.

By the *Alhambra* is generally meant something more than the royal residence itself. All the upper portion of the hill is walled in, and the name is applied to the whole of this space, which contains many towers and buildings, besides a large extent of open ground. In the time of the Moors 40,000 soldiers could be garrisoned there.

Ever since the conquest of the city this beautiful palace has been suffered to fall into decay. The exterior parts of the building are indestructible, but inside the exquisite work and the ornaments of the walls have been defaced, and some of the magnificent apartments used for common and degrading purposes. Most of the Spanish governors plundered it, until nothing was left. When the French took possession of it, in 1810, they converted it into a *place d'armes*, made a magazine of the old Moorish mosque, and barracks of some of the other buildings ; and when they left it, they mined and blew up eight of the towers.

A neighbouring summit higher still—

The mountain on which stands the *Generalife*, or summer palace. Here are still shown the old cypresses under which Boabdil's queen is said to have been discovered with her lover, Aben Hamet. The king took a horrible revenge. He invited to a banquet in the Alhambra the chiefs of the Abencerrages, to which illustrious race his hated rival belonged ; and, as they entered one by one, they were, to the number of thirty-

six, put to death. The apartment where the massacre was committed is called "La Sala de los Abencerages," and stains, said to have been made with their blood, are still seen on the marble of the fountain.

There, in a rude and rock-hewn throne—

"La Silla del Moro," or the Moor's Chair, where, it is said, Boabdil used to sit and survey the progress of the siege. It commands a magnificent view of the *vega*, or great plain of Granada.

*Vizier and sage and alfaqui,
Alcaid and chief of high degree.*

Alfaqui, a doctor of the law.
Alcaid, the governor of a fort or town.

Ribadoquin sent answering ball.

The *ribadoquin* was a kind of small cannon formerly used by the Moors and Spaniards.

No homage to the king he paid.

There is a similar instance recorded of Mohammed ben Abdallah, the founder of the Almohades, A.D. 1122. While yet a persecuted enthusiast, leading a vagabond life, he one day entered the grand mosque of Morocco, and boldly occupied the seat which was reserved for the imam and prince of the faithful. When Ali, the emperor, came in, and all the people rose to salute him, Mohammed did not deign to notice him even with a single glance. But at the conclusion of the service, he approached the prince, and said in a loud voice,—“Provide a remedy for the afflictions of thy people! One day Allah will require thee to account

for them." Ali asked him what he wanted. "Nothing this world can give," he replied; "my mission is to preach reformation and correct abuses." Four years afterwards this vagabond fanatic was the leader of a horde of proselytes that defeated Ali's army of a hundred thousand men, and overthrew the empire of the Almoravides.

For he alone hath skill to scan.

Throughout Arabia and all the East, Solomon has ever been held the chief of astrologers, magicians, and necromancers, and to have had power over the spirits of the earth, the sea, and the air.

*And hence this talismanic stone
Is by the name of Hormah known.*

Hormah signifies the curse, or the accursed; ruin; destruction.

*That gem
Which once decked Azrael's diadem.*

Azrael, the Arab name of the Angel of Death. A high authority tells us that

"His head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on."

His albornoz around him rolled.
Albornoz, a Moorish mantle.

*Seven hundred years ago
Moslems bade this structure grow.*

The cathedral of Cordova was formerly one of the most magnificent and famous mosques in the world,

and was reckoned next in sanctity to the Caaba of Mecca, and the Alaksa of Jerusalem. It was begun by Abderahman I., A.D. 786, and finished by his son, Hixem the Good, in 793. Its holiness was so great that the Iberian Moslems held a pilgrimage thither equivalent to going to Mecca. It was lighted by 4,700 lamps, which were kept continually burning. These lamps were cast from the bells which Almansor, the great general of Hixem II., brought away from the holy church of St. Jago de Compostella, in Galicia, when he despoiled it in 997.

Cordova was taken from the Moors in 1235, and this magnificent mosque was converted into a cathedral. As a Christian temple it became possessed of a marvellous amount of gold, silver, jewels, precious stones, and the like. Four of its silver candlesticks cost £850 sterling a-piece.

'Tis said the bell of Velilla tolled.

Velilla is a small village on the Ebro, near Zaragoza. The miraculous tolling of its bell always announced some disaster to Spain. The bell was cast by the Goths, who threw into the fused metal one of the thirty pieces of silver received by Judas Iscariot; hence its miraculous powers. It was heard to strike of itself when Pedro Arbues de Epila, the inquisitor, was assassinated, in 1485. At King Ferdinand's death, in 1516, it tolled with unwonted loudness; and again, in 1679, it was heard for the twentieth and last time.

Many a rapid corredor.

A *corredor* is a fleet horseman.

He was of the Anasseh breed.

The *Anasseh* and the Nedjid breed are the two most celebrated breeds of Arab horses.

And deep tones of the atabal.

The *atabal* was a kind of Moorish drum.

And on the Alcazaba's height.

The *Alcazaba* was a fortress surmounting that part of Granada which lay north of the Darro. The *Zacatin* was the business part of the city, and the *Vivarambla* the great square.

And every atalaya blazed.

Atalayas were watch-towers built on the tops of hills. Their ruins still abound in southern Spain.

Where, from the Giralda of Seville.

The *Giralda* is a lofty tower standing on the east side of the cathedral of Seville.

They boldly now a tala tried.

Tala, a devastating inroad, a foray.

Over despoblados wild.

A *despoblado* is a part of the country which has relapsed into a wilderness state ; a *barranco*, a deep, rocky valley ; a *rambla*, the dry bed of a stream.

He shall descend St. Michael's cave.

This cave is at the south end of the Rock of Gibraltar, looking towards the African coast. Its mouth is about a thousand feet above the sea. Within, there is a very rapid descent for about fifty yards, when the cavern terminates in an abyss which leads to unknown depths. There is an old story that it runs under the bottom of the sea all the way across to the other side of the Straits, and has an outlet somewhere among the mountains and rocks of Africa.

SIR HUBERT.

Ere from his heart the vital flood "the blade of mercy" drew.

"*The blade of mercy*" was a dagger, so called from its being used by a combatant to put his wounded foe out of agony.

And the might of the great Roland seemed seated in his arm.

The reference is to the famous paladin of Charlemagne, who with a stroke of his good sword Durandal is said to have cleft the mountain rocks asunder. The "*Song of Roland*" was the most famous and popular of all the heroic poems of the middle ages.

SOBIESKI.

When the great bell of St. Stephen's for the next assault should toll.

During the siege, all the bells in the city were silenced but the large one in the tower of St. Stephen's, which was used to give warning when the foe was about to make an assault.

It needed not the lance-borne plume conspicuous o'er the field.

Sobieski's place in the battle-field was always denoted by a plume raised on the point of a lance carried by one of his attendants. The king's shield, with his arms emblazoned on it, was borne by the brave Matzinski, who never left his side.

HILDEGARDE.

And wine and spices served anew.

At the conclusion of a banquet it was the custom to bring in wine and spices, which the guests partook of while they listened to songs of minstrels, or were amused in some other way.

'Twas echoed from the Lurley rock.

The *Lurley rock* is a high, steep rock on the right bank of the Rhine, a short distance above St. Goar, and about nine English miles below Falkenburg. It is celebrated for its echo, which repeats a sound, it is said, seven times.

THE END.

JUL 10 1975 ILL

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